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New Statesman
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CHILDREN'S BOOKS

CHRIS SMITH MP

APARTHEID AT OUR AIRPORTS

PAUL HAINSWORTH: French fascists on the move

ZHANA: Black women get organised

JOHN SPURLING: Low's sharp pencil

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The gentle art of gardening and other methods of drug production.

It all began in 1769 when a young doctor by the name of William Withering began to care for one of his patients in a manner which was not entirely medical.

The lady in question, Miss Helena Cookes, took great pleasure in making water-colour paintings of plants and flowers. And during her long convalescence, Withering took equal pleasure in collecting the subjects for her paintings.

Although Withering had studied botany at Edinburgh University, he found it to be dull and dreary. Eventually, though, his interest in the subject began to grow in direct proportion to his interest in Miss Cookes, whom he married in 1772.

Three years later, having published "A Botanical Arrangement of all the Vegetables Naturally Growing in Great Britain," the Witherings moved to Birmingham.

It was then that his opinion was sought on a particular cure for dropsy. (A form of fluid retention.) The cure was a herbal tea concocted by "an old woman in Shropshire" who would have probably been known as a "witch" in the best possible sense.

The effect of this "potion" was violent vomiting and purging. According to Withering: "...it was not difficult for one conversant in these subjects to perceive that the active herb could be no other than the foxglove."

The plant, also known as *Digitalis purpurea*, already had a long history of folk use, being listed as far back as 1327.

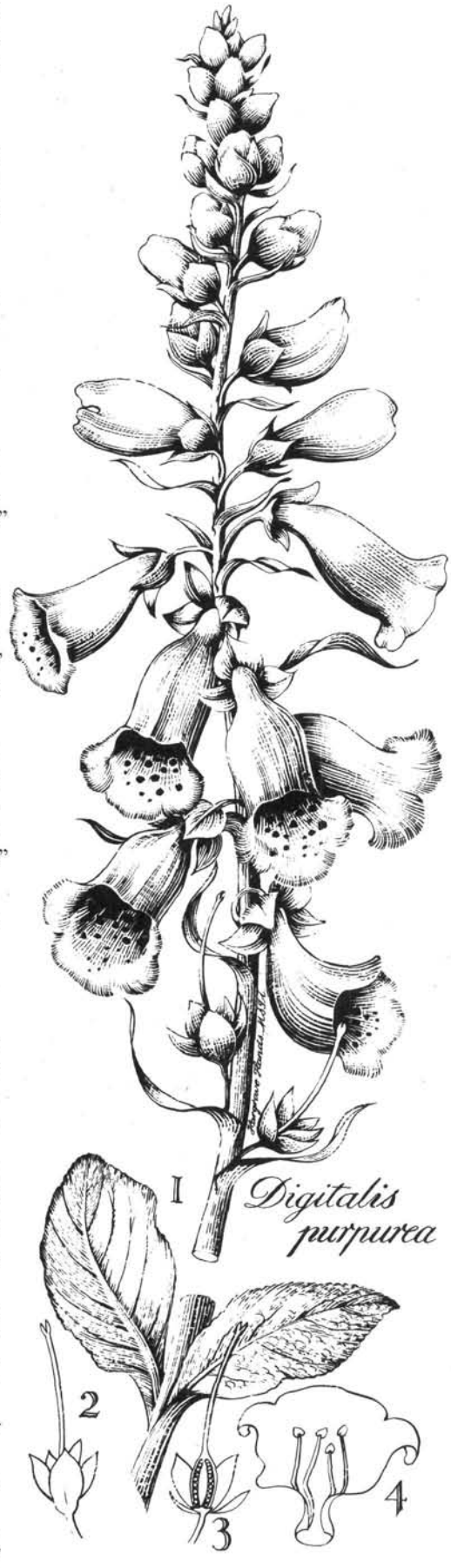
However, misuse of this potentially dangerous plant had often proved fatal.

So Withering set about determining what its true uses were and what was the proper and safe dosage for dropsy. He began to make regular and successful use of the plant and, ten years later, he was able to answer these questions in a book that has become a medical classic, entitled "An Account of the Foxglove and some of Its Medical Uses: with Practical Remarks on Dropsy and Other Diseases."

But while he noted that *digitalis* "has a power over the motion of the heart," he didn't realise that dropsy was usually nothing more than a symptom of heart disease and that this was, in fact, the condition he was treating.

William Withering died in 1799, a well respected and famous man of medicine.

During the century which followed, *digitalis* was widely used, or rather misused, for everything from insanity to haemorrhoids.



Only in the early years of this century did a proper understanding of the effects of *digitalis* on the heart emerge.

Since then, thanks to manufacturing techniques developed by a pharmaceutical company, this plant has provided the classic source of remedy for congestive heart failure. Although it has not always been provided by the same strain of the plant.

During industrial research conducted over 50 years ago by Dr. Sydney Smith, the European Foxglove *(Digitalis lanata)* was found to be four times more potent.

And after further investigation, he discovered it to contain a new glycoside not found in its English cousin.

He named this drug Digoxin. And to this day it has proved invaluable for the millions of people who suffer from heart problems.

It's just one of the many drugs whose source can quite literally be found right at our doorsteps.

But were it not for the intensive research and development undertaken by the pharmaceutical industry, these invaluable cures and treatments may never have found their way into everyday medical use.

It's an effort which requires an enormous investment of time and money. The industry as a whole spends over £500 million a year in this country. While one company can spend between £50-£60 million on developing one product.

So once a potentially beneficial chemical has been isolated or made, the company will try to protect its investment by taking out a patent. (But in the case of natural substances this can be only on the process of extraction.)

Patents, in theory, are valid for 20 years. But the necessary development and safety testing erodes 12-15 years of this time.

Which doesn't leave the company very long to earn an adequate return for re-investment in the search for new cures and treatments.

Without this re-investment for the health of the nation, everything in the garden would not seem so wonderful.

For further information about the British Pharmaceutical Industry, please write to: Dr. John Griffin, The ABPI, 12 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY.

abpi

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.

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NEXT WEEK

PRO-CHOICE/ PRO-LIFE

As the chance nears that an MP lucky in next Thursday's private member's draw at the Commons will seek to revive Enoch Powell's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill we begin a major 2-parter by JULIA SOUTH on the Right's new tactics over abortion

THE MOTLEY BATTALION

Who would have believed it? Tomorrow week, and only 50 years late, another memorial goes up to the International Brigade, this time in Liverpool. JUDITH COOK has been tracing the *un*famous who went to the Spanish Civil War

APPLES V BANANAS*

It would be 'jumping off the edge with eyes shut' to aim at breaking the UK out of NATO without matched concessions from the Warsaw Pact, argues E.P. THOMPSON ahead of CND annual conference next week

** to be explained!*

SEVEN WOMEN POETS

JOHN LUCAS reviews collections by Anne Stevenson, Elizabeth Jennings, Patricia McCarthy, Amryl Johnson, Stef Pixner, Denise Riley (left) and Fleur Adcock

New Statesman

Vol 110 No 2850 8 November 1985

Bleak prospects for Geneva

ODDS AGAINST the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in a fortnight producing anything substantial and constructive lengthen daily. The impression grows that both sides are more concerned with propaganda and image than with substance.

This applies particularly to Washington, since the Gorbachev presentation has been a great deal more professional and effective than Reagan's. But, so far as substance goes, neither side gives the impression of believing that a major co-operative step towards nuclear arms control is immediately in prospect. Both give the impression of manoeuvring so as to be in a position to say as convincingly as possible that the failure was the responsibility of the other side.

This analysis applies particularly to the Soviet offer to make a 50 per cent cut in strategic nuclear arsenals and to Reagan's eventual response that the Americans accepted the proposal in principle. The notion of 'cutting arsenals in half' has the kind of attractive directness that pleases advisers who have their eye mainly on how the headlines will look.

The Reagan Administration was clearly caught flat-footed by the 50 per cent initiative. All the signs are not only that no positive American negotiating position in advance of the summit meeting had been agreed, but that there was not even an agreement that there should be such a position. Belatedly, in response to the Soviet initiative, the Americans decided to cobble together a response and to ask for the current Geneva round to be extended to give proper time for the American proposals to be explained.

But both Moscow and Washington know that the offer and the acceptance in principle of 50 per cent cuts in nuclear arsenals advance the matter not one inch — unless and until there is agreement on *what* is being cut by 50 per cent. The Americans have always insisted that reciprocal cuts must involve the Soviet Union reducing its land-based nuclear deterrent by the negotiated figure. Since the Soviet deterrent is heavily dependent on land-based Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles, especially the huge SS 18s, any mutually imposed ceiling of this kind involves a proportional reduction on the Soviet side that is unacceptable to the Soviet military-industrial complex and the US knows it.

Against that the Americans have never accepted why their hugely superior nuclear bomber fleet needs to be put into a strategic nuclear *missile* balance: and there is no indication as yet that the new Reagan response takes any different position on this point. In other words it looks a foregone conclusion that the agreement in principle on '50 per cent cuts' will turn out once again to be mutually distrustful *disagreement* in practice.

Behind the façades of summitry, there is also the reality of the internal politics on both sides. The question has to be asked why the Soviet Union was not able or willing to dismantle the 32 SS-20s required to make it in effect politically impossible for the Dutch government to go ahead, as it has done this month, with its long postponed decision to allow the deployment of American cruise missiles on Dutch soil.

To have achieved such a position would have been a major tactical and political success for Moscow. It would have deprived the Americans and NATO of the right to declare that cruise and Pershing deployment had gone through exactly as planned and it

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would have reopened difficult political and military debates between Washington and its European NATO allies.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the reason why the *political* arguments in favour of dismantling the necessary number of SS-20s did not prevail was that the Soviet military would not agree to it. But, if the paranoidly defensive Soviet military jibs at doing away with 32 missiles, what will be its reaction to a proposal that involves doing away with 2,000?

On the American side, the vested interest that matters is not directly the military, but is the industrial complex that is now living high off the arms race (see Felix Pirani in last week's *NS*). The political power of that lobby — directly in the Congress, indirectly through its supporters in the Reagan arms control team — is such that even a President who firmly knew his own mind would not have anything like complete freedom of action.

That lobby does not want arms control. Its supporters, like Richard Perle in the Pentagon, argue openly that the US-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty should be set aside in order for the Star Wars gravy train to keep rolling along. Quite simply, it does not want restraint and is prepared to use any argument to ensure that summits and Geneva do not lead to such restraint.

In this atmosphere there is the real danger that the hype surrounding a Gorbachev-Reagan summit will be followed by a destabilising sense of anti-climax. The best that can now probably be hoped for is some kind of positive holding operation as a result of the summit, perhaps with the Americans agreeing at least not to deploy Star Wars weapons, but only to continue research.

The diplomacy and the internal politics of the situation hold out no hope of anything more than this minimalist prospect. The equally real alternative is another major twist to the nuclear arms spiral, if the summit breaks down completely. □

CHIC PIX

THE
CONSUMER
CATASTROPHE

A
FEMINIST VIEW

CHIC PIX
at the ICA
and Compendium

READ

I WALKED
WITH A
ZOMBIE

Sidgwick & Jackson
£3.95

CHIC PIX

___ I FOUND OUT ___

My government is lost

ALL THE POMP and circumstances of the State Opening of Parliament could not conceal that the government that actually wrote the speech that the Queen mouthed is looking increasingly second hand. The programme it presented consisted almost entirely of elements that have already been tried and found wanting. It was the manifesto of a government that has lost is way.

Little things stood out. Reform of the Brussels Common Agricultural Policy was a priority. But this is the government that blew the one moment in a decade when a British government could have exerted real pressure for CAP reform when it caved in and agreed to increase the Community's revenues from VAT *without* getting any fundamental reform of the CAP.

Thatcherism is now keen for 'more normal relations' with Argentina. But the hallmark of this government's Fortress Falklands policy since 1982 has been totally unbending lack of magnanimity in victory, even after the Galtieri regime was put on trial by its democratically elected successor. We are, also, said warmly to support the Contadora peace process in Central America — but this is from the only European government that has consistently given practical and verbal comfort to the Reagan Administration's policy of state terrorism against Nicaragua. We are said to be anxious to fight famine and disaster, but this is from a government which even in the year of the great Ethiopian famine only gave extra aid to one place in Africa by taking it away from another.

There were larger aspects of seediness too. We are said to be working with the Commonwealth and the EEC for peaceful and fundamental change in South Africa. In fact at all recent meetings of either body the Thatcher government has been in virtually complete isolation because of its unprincipled and equivocal stand on South Africa. Change is certainly coming in South Africa, but it will not be as a result of anything that the Thatcher government has done and the time has long gone when that fundamental change might have been peaceful.

Backed into its laager, the Botha government in fact this week took a piece of Mrs Thatcher's advice. Her view is that those who opposed any established state authority by force are terrorists and should be denied 'the oxygen of publicity'. In her view it is then right for the state to apply censorship of the media to cut off such oxygen — she was speaking in Washington about the IRA. Well, Botha took the point and stopped radio and television reporting the progress of the fundamental changes. Narrow commercial self-interest, quite apart from morality, ought to persuade the Thatcher government not to put at risk this country's future relations with a future Black South Africa and with the rest of Black Africa by refusing to take effective part in sanctions and other moves to weaken the Botha regime.

But it was in domestic policy that the used quality of the government was most apparent. All the nostrums that for six years we have been told would transform this country, socially and economically, were trotted out once again. They have failed lamentably in the past and there is not the slightest reason to suppose that they won't now accelerate our slide into two nations.

But still there they were again: firm monetary and fiscal policies, firm control of public spending, yet more privatisation to promote efficiency and wider share ownership, yet more powers to the police.

There is no longer even a pretence of a plausible strategy behind all this now, as there once was. The game is simply to keep the lid on things as well as possible until the Chancellor can make another big income tax cut in the year before the next general election. It is as cynical as that. □

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Isle of Dogs to get a South African complex

A SOUTH AFRICAN company is backing a development in London's Docklands which will be one of the largest tourist complexes in Britain. Sun, owner of controversial Sun City in Bophuthatswana, is behind the venture, along with pop music promoter Harvey Goldsmith.

The Docklands' scheme, for the North Quay in the Isle of Dogs, includes shops, restaurants, offices, centred around a 400-bed hotel. Total costs are likely to exceed £100 million.

The London Docklands Development Corporation has already selected the South African-backed group to build the west part of the North Quay project. Detailed plans will be submitted in the next few days and considered by the Docklands' board on 21 November.

If the green light is given, the Isle of Dogs project will be among the largest South African investments in Britain. Sun is involved in two ways. It holds a third of the shares in Kunick Leisure Ltd, the British company heading the venture, and hopes to win the £50 million contract to build the hotel, the most important part of the complex.

Sun City — nicknamed Sin City — is now the biggest part of the Sun empire. Located in the Bantustan Bophuthatswana, outside South African restrictions on gambling and inter-racial sex, it's a magnet for visitors from South Africa.

Sun City remains politically controversial because Bophuthatswana has been ignored by the international community on the grounds that South Africa uses it as a 'dumping ground' for unwanted blacks. Even the UK government has refused to extend diplomatic recognition.

Harvey Goldsmith, one of the major British shareholders in Kunick Leisure and also backer of the successful Live Aid African famine concert, takes a different stand. 'I'm against apartheid. But in Bophuthatswana there is no apartheid. I've been out there, and would be quite happy for any of my musicians to play there,' he said.

Martin Bailey

Martin Bailey is on the staff of the Observer.

ALL CHANGE AT THE LONDON NAMIBIAN PROPAGANDA MACHINE

SIR TREVOR LLOYD-HUGHES, who in a previous incarnation was Harold Wilson's press secretary, has been ousted as unofficial 'Namibian ambassador' to London. He's been replaced by two of his former employees. DENIS HERBSTEIN reports on the changing apartheid payroll

AS A 'public affairs consultant' for the South African regime in Namibia, Sir Trevor always preferred to avoid nasty questions from prying journalists. But in July he lost the contract — worth at least £172,000 a year — and recently he's been phoning round Fleet Street saying how fed up he was with taking BOSS money. Furthermore, he's furious that the lucrative contract with the Pretoria-backed regime in Windhoek has been carried off by two of his former young protégés.

In 1980 Sir Trevor and other image builders in Washington, Bonn and Paris were hired to put the case for South Africa's illegal occupation of the United Nations trust territory. He now claims to have had doubts about the product, but was flown to Namibia where his fears were allayed. 'Apartheid had been abolished,' he says. 'What was left was only petty. So I agreed to help with their image-building in Britain.'

His office near London Bridge became the headquarters of the 'Namibia Information Service' which sent out newsletters and cassettes to opinion formers. It was in fact an unofficial Namibian embassy.

Within months of landing the contract, a parliamentary 'All Party Namibia Group' was set up, headed by the South African apologist, Nicholas Winterton. Asked about his role in its establishment. Sir Trevor smiles knowingly: 'I contacted MPs, the way it's done.' Tory MPs and even the Labour Lords Paget and Molloy were spirited out on 'fact-finding tours'. Martin Stevens (Tory, Fulham) having never set foot in Africa before, spent six days in Namibia and wrote a voluminous report recommending that Namibia be placed under a South African protectorate for at least five years.

Fall from grace

But the time came when Pretoria was no longer happy with Lloyd-Hughes's performance. On a visit to Windhoek he had made ill-informed statements about local politics. And back home he wasn't even impressing Sir Geoffrey Howe and Malcolm Rifkind at the Foreign Office. The South Africans were no doubt unhappy that Lloyd-Hughes' other clients included CTC, the Russian cruise line.

Two executive assistants helped run the Namibia account. One of them, Captain Patrick Watson, ex-Black Watch, is the son of Major-General Andrew Watson, the former British military attaché in Washington. The other, Stephen Govier, now aged 27, was for three years a Westminster city councillor. Sir Trevor no doubt hoped that Govier would get into parliament quite soon and Watson would develop contacts in NATO, with resulting new consultancy opportunities.

But earlier this year he sacked Govier for 'gross misconduct' — i.e. dealing directly with Windhoek behind his back. Lloyd-Hughes correctly suspected that both Govier and Watson were being wooed by South Africa House. He found entries in Watson's diaries referring to meetings with South African officials. And Govier angered his boss by secretly writing to the Princess of Wales offering her a Karakul (Persian) lamb coat from the Namibia-based International Karakul Secretariat. The offer was politely refused.

When last June Pretoria handed Namibia over to an unelected 'transitional' government, the new regime sought a fresh image abroad. Sean Cleary, an experienced South African diplomat on leave of absence from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, is masterminding the latest attempt to get round the UN-backed plan for independence.

Though not in the league of the Muldergate propaganda sell, the thrusting Cleary and his two ambitious agents in London intend to uncover and then proclaim the virtues of the South Africa-friendly regime. Govier and Watson's firm, Strategic Network International, has rented an expensive suite of offices at Storey's Gate, close to Parliament, from which to operate the new unofficial embassy.

All Sir Trevor is left with is a legal action against the hard men in Windhoek. But he has gained a consolation prize — a curious one in the light of his apparent digust at having to take BOSS money. Recently he signed a deal to publicise the Transkei, first of the Bantustan Statelets, which has received recognition from only one country — South Africa. ●

Photo Source

Happier days: Lloyd-Hughes and Harold Wilson off to Rhodesia in 1966. Inset: Stephen Govier

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WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HINKLEY B?

ON 25 OCTOBER there was a serious accident at the Hinkley B power station in Somerset. The CEGB is blaming it on overstrain caused by the miners' strike. But, reports JUDITH COOK, it's far more likely that it was due to a basic design fault

THE ACCIDENT came at an extremely embarrassing time for the CEGB who were having secret dicussions with the local authorities in the area about their plans to build a pressurised water reactor at Hinkley, so sure are they of getting the go ahead on Sizewell. This may explain why it wasn't until 29 October that news of the accident leaked out and why it only appeared in the local press on 30 October.

It appears that there was a fracture in an input pipe which resulted in thousands of gallons of water leaking into the reactor core. The water has now been pumped out and is being held in storage tanks, waiting to be discharged into the Bristol Channel. More than that we don't know as the whole event is being kept secret. The CEGB has issued its routine statement saying that no one is at risk as a result of the accident. This has prompted Sir Kelvin Spencer, ex-government adviser on nuclear power, to ask why there was such a prolonged delay before the accident was reported and to speculate that the CEGB just doesn't know how much radioactivity was released. Therefore it's not possible to say whether or not there's a health risk.

Local radio and T.V. coverage has implied that this is the first accident of any kind at an Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor (AGR) since they came into commission. This is not only untrue of AGRs in general, it is untrue of Hinkley B in particular.

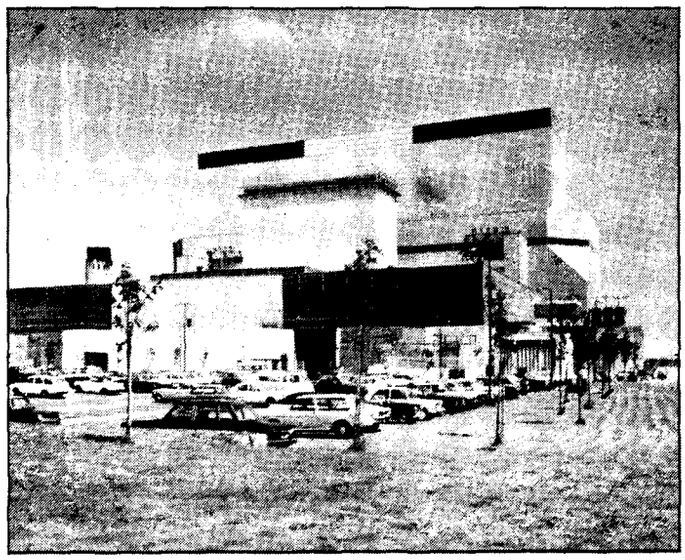
Hinkley B came on stream in February 1976 and within an hour had to be closed down. Prior to this, just before it began producing electricity, a loud rattling was heard from within the reactor. It appeared that a large valve was vibrating violently as it tried to stem the inrush of hot gases. Nobody knew which of the 308 valves it was and more and more had to be withdrawn before it was found. Severe damage was sustained to the reactor vessel.

Previous cracked pipe

In June 1977, before the reactor was actually producing electricity, a major pipe carrying cooling water to the heat exchanger broke. Because of poor design, the same broken pipe was also connected to the back up system. It took staff several hours to get a fire hose rigged up and working properly. Afterwards, a report stated that after no more than six hours of having the coolant system out of action the core would have become contaminated.

It would appear there are built-in design faults at Hinkley B. As early as 1973, while it was still being built, the then chairman of the CEGB, Arthur Hawkins, told a House of Commons Select Committee that the design of the boilers made it difficult to control water levels: 'You are facing two almost impossible reconciliations. You get corrosion outside in one condition and corrosion inside in the other . . .' He spoke of having crawled through the system at Hinkley Point: 'It is so difficult to maintain that the problem is keeping it in service for the fuel design life.'

Even if the CEGB's excuse that the accident was the fault of the miners' strike is true, it says little for the efficacy of AGRs. Paddy Ashdown MP, in whose constituency Hinkley B is, has asked for a full public report, if only to allay growing public fears. ●



Innocent and sunny it may look — but doubts remain

More meddling from the Met

METROPOLITAN POLICE officers now claim the right to refuse to allow suspects to be represented by solicitors of their choice. Coupled with other cases where the Met has denied access to solicitors (NS 25 October), this practice threatens to undermine the new scheme governing interrogations introduced by the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

Jill Bendix, a solicitor with the firm of Marcus Barnett, recently acted for a 16 year old male charged in connection with the disturbances in Tottenham. He had been granted legal aid. She agreed, after discussions with the police, to a remand in police custody for further interviews to take place in her presence.

But when she arrived at Hornsey police station the next day, an embarrassed CID officer told her: 'You're going to go mad at this — I've been ordered not to allow you to see your client.' Later that day she met DCS Melvin, who leads the Tottenham investigation. He told her that it would be professionally improper for her firm to be involved since they might pass on information to other defendants they represent. Ms Bendix reminded him that as a solicitor she is bound by codes of professional ethics, and that she was satisfied that no conflict of interest existed with the other cases. Melvin was unmoved and told her that 'it would not be in the interests of justice' for her to act in the case. The police then unsuccessfully tried to persuade other firms to take the case on.

Nothing in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act allows the police to behave like this. This case also violates a suspect's statutary right to choose which solicitor will represent her or him in a criminal case.

Although Ms Bendix's application to a High Court judge for an order allowing her access failed, an appeal is under consideration. The Law Society is also taking it up with the Home Office and has indicated that it may fund any appeal.

Jim Driscoll

Women confer on policing

THE RECENT near-fatal shooting of Cherry Groce in Brixton, and the death of Cynthia Jarrett in Haringey, both of which sparked off major public disorder, sharpened the focus of a GLC 'Women and Policing' conference held last Saturday (2 November) at London's County Hall. More than 300 women attended, reflecting the growing involvement of women in policing issues — co-ordinated by women working in local authority police committees.

The conference heard a detailed account of the police raid that led to Cynthia Jarrett's death, from her daughter Patricia. She described how, looking for her brother, the police let themselves into the house with a key, turned the house over 'including the dirty laundry basket' and refused to take the ailing Mrs Jarrett to hospital in a police car 'as it breached their regulations'.

Such indignities at the hands of the police are routine to the black community. The conference looked at many police-related subjects, but two themes emerged. First, the attack that the police themselves represent, particularly on black, Irish and working class communities, with women at the sharp end; and the aggressive policing of women who do not conform, or who are engaged in political action — anti-apartheid or peace movement women. In this context, the government's new Public Order proposals were condemned. But there was also strong criticism of police failure to *protect* women from attack — whether in the form of domestic violence, rape or other kinds of sexual assault. The new Sexual Offences legislation, designed to protect women from kerb crawlers, was criticised as more likely to be used to harass black men and act as a 'new sus law' than help women.

GLC abolition threatens the work of many women and policing groups and one conference demand was for the maintenance of 'networking' between groups — a distinctly feminist way of doing politics.

Melissa Benn

White poppies for peace

THIS YEAR there's an answer to the dilemma of wanting to *commemorate* the war dead and dying while having uneasy feelings about the military involvement in Remembrance Sunday. The Peace Pledge Union is promoting the lapsed tradition of wearing *white* poppies for peace.

The idea was thought up in 1933 by the Cooperative Women's Guild — early feminists — as a protest against all wars and particularly the First World War. Despite considerable ostracism from 'patriots', the number of wearers rose to 85,000 by 1938. Vera Brittain was one of those involved.

The poppies should be available from radical bookshops or in bulk from the PPU itself. But if not, you can resurrect another tradition: making them yourself. In 1933 the Guild approached the British Legion to ask if they would supply them. They refused — on the grounds that it was disrespectful to the dead.

Jolyon Jenkins

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Despite NOP and MORI. . .

No sign of Tory recovery in October voting

OCTOBER'S council by-elections provide partial confirmation of a recovery in Labour's fortunes, and some indications of a slight decline in Alliance support. But there are few signs that opinion poll evidence of a Tory upswing is being translated into votes in local ballot boxes.

In the last two weeks of October — when the Conservative recovery was greatest according to MORI and NOP polls — the party lost 11 of the 17 seats it was defending, and gained none.

Altogether 60 by-elections took place during October, starting with the Thursday of Labour's conference at Bournemouth. The gains-and-losses table is as follows:

	Seats defended	Seats lost	Seats gained	Seats held now
Con	30	16	0	14
Lab	17	4	8	21
Lib	7	2	8	13
SDP	1	0	9	10
Others	5	3	0	2

Labour's gains were concentrated in the first half of the month, whereas Alliance victories have been more evenly distributed. Unusually, the SDP gained more seats than the Liberals; normally, the Liberals score the greater number of gains.

Thirty-nine of the seats were fought by candidates from all three main political groups. Altogether 76,000 votes were cast, as follows:

Conservative	27,398	36.0%
Liberal/SDP	26,974	35.4%
Labour	20,560	27.0%
Others	1,167	1.5%

On the face of it, these figures look good for the government and bad for Labour. But there was a heavy bias in the pattern of seats fought: more than three times as many votes were cast in wards being defended by the Tories as in wards being defended by Labour. And since the majority of Alliance gains (13 out of 17) were from the Tories, this pattern of seats also boosted the Alliance's overall share of the vote.

In these circumstances attempts to translate the raw voting figures into a national picture is harder than normal. My best guesstimate is that nationwide party support, as reflected by October's results, is: Labour 34 per cent, Alliance 33, Conservatives 31.

But the only real conclusion is that at local election level, politics remains a closely-fought three-way struggle, whose most consistent feature is the continued ability of the Alliance to win seats from the Tories.

Peter Kellner

Council scoreboard

3 October

Wansdyke DC	LAB GAIN (Con)
Grampian Reg	LAB GAIN (Lib)
Arun DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Gillingham DC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Hinckley & Bosworth DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Wiltshire CC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Copeland DC	Lab hold
Lancaster DC	Lab hold
Langburgh DC	Lab hold
Llanwelli DC	Lab hold
North Dorset DC	Lib hold
Notts CC	Con hold
Lancaster DC	Con hold
Lothian Reg	Con hold

10 October

Neath DC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Neath DC	Lab hold
Stafford DC	Lib hold
NE Derbyshire DC	Con hold

17 October

Wigan DC	LAB GAIN (Con)
Derby DC	LAB GAIN (Con)
Erewash DC	LAB GAIN (Ind)
Derwentside DC	LAB GAIN (Ind)
Glyndwr DC	SDP GAIN (Ind)
Derwentside DC	Lab hold
Purbeck DC	Lib hold
Brent LBC	Con hold
West Wilts DC	Con hold
West Lindsey DC	Con hold
Sedgemoor DC	Con hold
Preseli DC	Ind hold

24 October

Luton DC	LAB GAIN (Con)
Oswestry DC	LAB GAIN (Lib)
Guildford DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Surrey CC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Test Valley DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Test Valley DC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Portsmouth DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Melton DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Hyndburn DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
North Herts DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Workington DC	Lab hold
Newark DC	Lab hold
Southend DC	Lib hold
Melton DC	Lib hold
Motherwell DC	Lab hold
St Albans DC	SDP hold
Thanet DC	Con hold
Cumbria CC	Con hold
Elmsbridge DC	Con hold
West Oxon DC	Con hold
Western Isles	Ind hold

31 October

Wycombe DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Dover DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Malvern DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Worcester DC	Lab hold
Lambeth LBC	Lab hold
Dover DC	Lab hold
Kent CC	Lab hold
Dover DC	Con hold
Shrewsbury & Atcham DC	Con hold

MISCELLANY

Vulgar and Absurd

Who is succumbing to Roy Strong's emotional blackmail at the V&A? 'Some people have been very generous, especially the old age pensioners,' oiled their press office when we asked them. But there seems to be some problem with The Boilerhouse. This celebration of all that's best in design, owned by the Conran foundation, is in the V&A basement — but they say they have no intention of extorting 'voluntary' contributions. So Sir Roy has been forced to site cash desks either side of the room — but not in front of it.

Oxygen of publicity

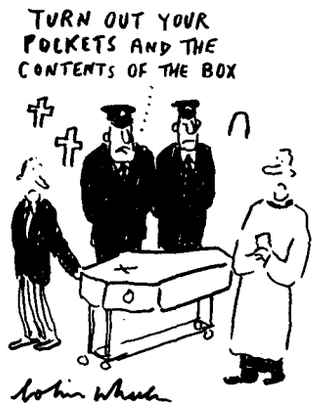
Last month we reported how American academics were hopping into bed with the CIA. We know you'll be relieved to hear that members of the British Fourth Estate haven't been shy in forming liaisons with American spooks either. James Adams, the youthful silk shirt and bow tie-wearing defence correspondent of the Sunday Times, *for whom one of the main perks of the job is to be able to jet around in very fast planes laid on by the RAF, is listed as a participant next month at a junket laid on by the US Defense Intelligence College. The DIC is an arm, if not exactly the brain, of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon's intelligence branch. Adams will be giving his views on 'Support Mechanisms for International Terrorism'. Apart from a handful of academics and a woman from the Security Pacific National Bank, he'll be the only non-spook on the panel. Will he spill the beans about Rupert Murdoch's support for such state-supported terror as, well, the muscular interviewing techniques employed by the British Army?*

1988 at Westminster

A tip for our readers: do not try to put money on the next general election at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. There are lots of people in betting shops at that time, and they are *not interested* in the Labour Party being a racing certainty at 9-4 (to be the largest party). They are interested in horses. All the same, in tireless pursuit of our readers' interests our resident tipster has (three weeks after recommending a bet at Coral, when we published our survey of bookmakers' odds) succeeded in investing his £20 (plus £2 tax), which will mature in 1988, earning a clear £45. To those readers who phoned in, saying Coral denied all knowledge of such a bet, we advise: go in the morning and insist they phone Head Office.

Grave incident

Two unemployment statistics in Manchester were swapping notes on ways of passing time. 'Tell you what's a nice walk,' said one. 'Nip up Southern Cemetery. There's squirrels and all that and some of the old cotton bosses' graves are worth a look.' His friend felt a twinge of guilt at failure to pay his respects recently at his mother's memorial. On the next sunny morning, he did so and then wandered round the graveyard to 'have a walk



and a think'. He did see a squirrel. He also saw, for 45 minutes, three large members of the Greater Manchester police, who insisted on searching his pockets and his car. 'Bit odd, isn't it?' said one, 'wandering around a cemetery in the middle of the day? What do you think you're doing?' 'I've been to see me Mum and I just fancied a look round,' said our informant, whose story is fast acquiring folklore status in the pubs of Manchester. 'Next time you go and visit your mother,' they replied, 'visit her and then buzz off'. And released him.

Near myths

A modest blow for women's lib was struck at Thessalonika last week. Two hundred journalists attending a symposium on press and democracy were invited to visit Mount Athos, home of some of the world's oldest monasteries. Just one problem: the hacks could go, but the hackettes couldn't. The monks haven't allowed any women near Mount Athos for more than a thousand years. Women journalists led by Mia Doornaert of the Belgian journalists' union and Betty Purcell of Irish Radio, led a deputation to complain about the discrimination in the programme. In the end the Mount Athos visit was undertaken by a much depleted group of sheepish men — mostly from Greece and Eastern Europe, despite their proclaimed enthusiasm for equal rights — whilst most men showed solidarity with the women. These included 100 per cent of the British journalists present (to wit, the *NS* Political Editor) and the 'women's' outing was much more fun.

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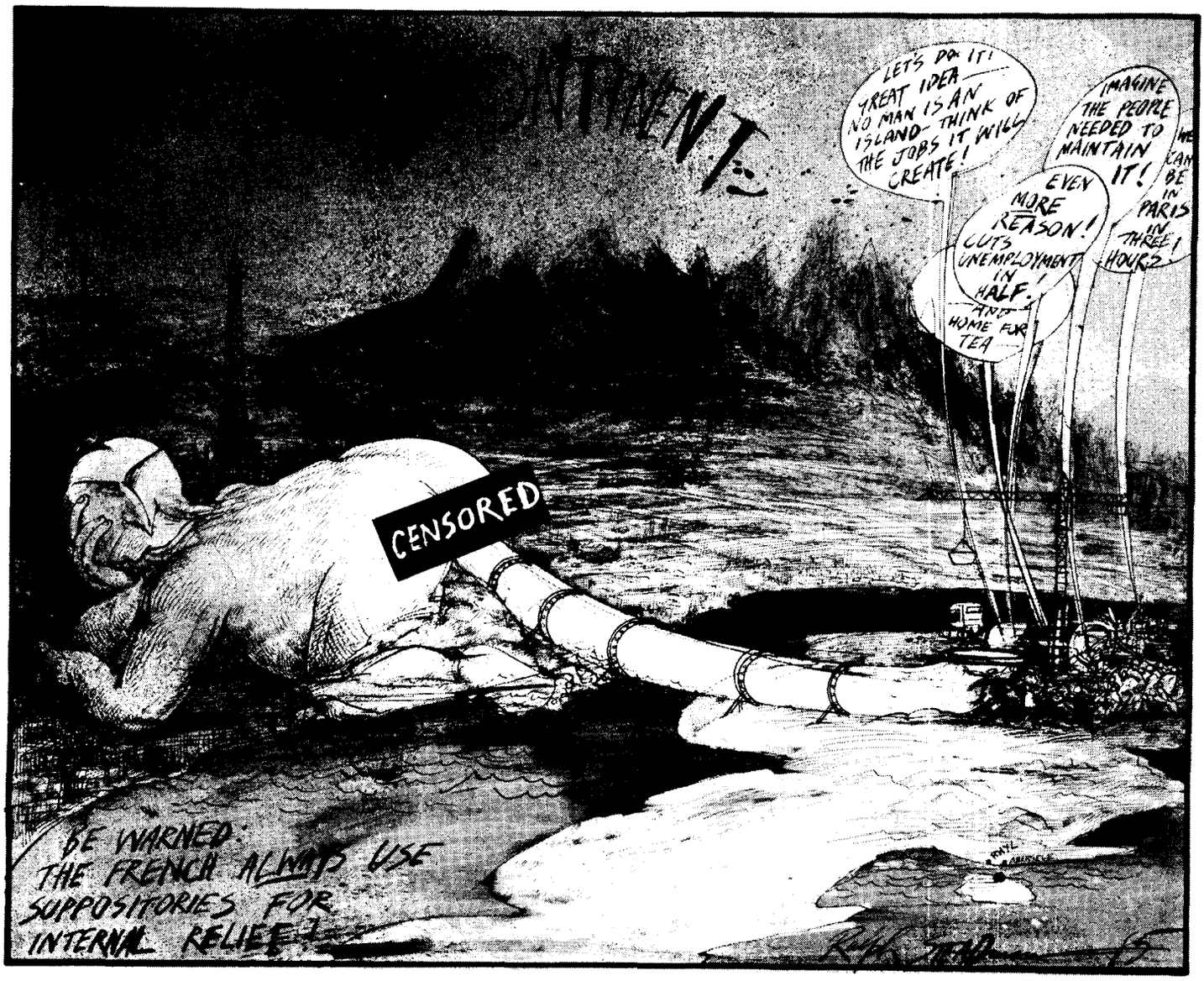
LET'S DO IT!
GREAT IDEA
NO MAN IS AN ISLAND- THINK OF THE JOBS IT WILL CREATE!
IMAGINE THE PEOPLE NEEDED TO MAINTAIN IT!
EVEN MORE REASON!
CUTS UNEMPLOYMENT IN HALF!
AND HOME FOR TEA
WE CAN BE IN PARIS IN THREE HOURS!
CENSORED
BE WARNED: THE FRENCH ALWAYS USE SUPPOSITORIES FOR INTERNAL RELIEF

'The relief of Turning Left'

I came up to Cambridge four weeks ago to read English at one of the most right-wing colleges, and I'm enjoying life very much. But as my centrist politics seem to slide left-wards in reaction to the atmosphere around me, it becomes a relief to realise that I am surrounded by other comparatively left-wing students...if I could find them. Most of the ones in the second and third years seem to have little allegiance to their particular college (Peoples Republic of King's being an honourable exception) but form their own circle from all over Cambridge.

But for me, still finding my feet, it means that meeting these people, usually identifiable as the ones with short hair, big earrings and large coats, is a gradual process. So the Turning Left conference held here last weekend — by Cambridge University Left — was highly welcome not just as a forum where important issues could be discussed, but as an opportunity to talk to a wider stratum of politically aware people than any single college can provide.

The atmosphere was exactly what I had hoped it would be: friendly chaos. Refreshments were run in an endearingly makeshift fashion, slapping together salad sandwiches (white bread banned) or trying to sell pots of jam 'for those late night snacks'. Volunteers crawled through legs to exchange places between shifts. The bookstall was run on much the same lines. I could have read through the entire contents without anyone minding, and in fact chatted with one man who seemed to have done just that, judging by the amount he knew about both Nicaragua and female sexuality.

Something of this relaxed attitude permeated many of the workshops. At the 'lesbian and gay liberation' session progress was at first slow due to the gradual realisation that the speaker — Chris Smith, gay Labour MP — was going to be extremely late. When he did turn up, we were all deep in a fascinating discussion ranging from wry remarks about Cambridge — 'a certain type of gay man is *very* acceptable here' — to general observations like 'straight men object to lesbians because the women don't fancy them'.

I had the strong feeling that for quite a few people present, me included, it didn't really matter *what* we were discussing. The important thing was being able to talk *openly* with a group who were relatively free from sexism, racism and all the other 'isms', and who didn't equate lesbians with vegans. In Cambridge, where students can seem friendly and sociable till they mention 'coons' quite naturally — and can't understand you're taking offence — this atmosphere is rarer than one would think, and very therapeutic. I don't mind arguing with girls who are happy to call themselves 'chairmen', but it's a relief to find yourself among others who agree with you and take your conversation on from there...

Likewise, how refreshing to hear speakers who think unequivocally that South Africa's present government is a Bad Thing and say so. This session, with a speaker from the ANC, was firmly didactic and informative; it was also both powerful and moving. I don't know many people here who would deny that Cambridge is isolated from the real world; its insularity makes reading the newspapers often a conscious effort. Serious discussion of global problems like that of South Africa puts a lot of rather insignificant ones — essay crises, love life, getting up at six in the morning to go rowing — into the shade.

And this was perhaps the important aspect of Turning Left: a sense of proportion. A relief, anyway, after patronising TV 'documentaries' which tokenise the Cambridge Left into facile sterotypes (none genuine without Lenin posters on the wall), to meet individuals who were far from loony. Next year I might even make sandwiches — favourites this time were the anarchists' (cheese and chile) or the Kinnock (cheese and not much else)...

Lauren Milne Henderson

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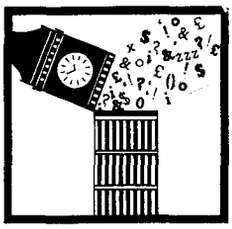

Why the shadow cabinet should brush up on their Greek

FOR MANY PEOPLE who found Labour's 1981 conference a nightmare — with the Alliance miles ahead in the polls and the people's party preoccupied with the battle between Tony Benn and Denis Healey — the one bright spot came at the *Tribune* rally. Up rose a speaker from Greece and offered a glimpse of left-wing socialist policies about to be implemented. PASOK had just won power on a programme that included the expulsion of American bases and withdrawal from the Common Market. We were given a vision of the future, and assured that it would work.

A visit to Greece today quickly dispels that early optimism. To be sure, Andreas Papandreou was returned to power for the second time last June. As a political tactician Greece's Prime Minister has few equals. But the US bases? Still there. The Common Market? Still in.

And that, relatively speaking, is the *good* news. Papandreou has transformed his initial policies from unnegotiable decisions into valuable bargaining counters. The price he extracted from Brussels was greater support for Greek farmers; and PASOK's victory this year stems in no small measure from rising living standards in rural Greece.

As to the American bases, they should have gone by 1983. But Papandreou allowed them another five years. And last week Michael Armacost, the United States's under-secretary in charge of keeping NATO's Mediterranean allies in line, was in Athens to discuss what will happen after 1988.

What precisely was agreed remains unclear. But the broad tenor of the talks is easily gauged from local press reaction. PASOK and centre-right newspapers talked of a new warmth in Greek-American relations; the Communist press accused Papandreou of selling out. In statements at the end of the talks, Papandreou said the current agreement on US bases would be 'terminated'. Armacost said they were 'terminable'.

Either way, nobody was left in any doubt that American troops will still be around well into the 1990s. The likeliest solution is that the US will 'hand over' its bases to NATO; which would be rather like Al Capone transferring his bootlegging business into a family trust.

So why has Papandreou retreated so far on both issues? The answer is an ugly five-letter word: money. The Greek economy is up shit creek. Inflation, the government proudly announced the other day, is down — from 25 to 18 per cent. The country's public borrowing and foreign debt figures would give even the most fervent Keynesian reflationist a heart attack. Bluntly, Brussels and Washington operate as Greece's bank managers, helping their client to come to terms with its overdraft.

The price that Papandreou has had to pay has not been just in his foreign policy. At home he has recently introduced austerity measures that would remind any British left-winger of James Callaghan on an off day. The drachma has been devalued by 15 per cent, the indexation of public sector salaries abandoned, tax allowances reduced and public spending cut. All in all, it is intended to reduce real wages by 10 per cent. Size for size, the strategy applied to the British economy would involve reducing public borrowing from £45 to £33 billion a year.

To say that Greece's trade union movement has taken all this badly would be an understatement. A series of one-day strikes in the public sector has been followed by a call for a one-day general strike next Thursday. The Greek equivalent of the TUC has been torn apart. Last week 27 of its 45-member executive voted to sack its pro-Papandreou general secretary. The outvoted 18 PASOK members sought an immediate injunction to prevent his dismissal. Their lawyers said we can't do anything today: *we're* on strike.

PETER KELLNER

TRANSLATING one country's experiences to another is always a tricky business. Differences in geography, history and political organisation are bound to count for a lot. But since Papandreou — like Mitterrand, who also came to power in 1981 — was explicitly presented as a shining example to Britain's Left, it is at least worth the effort of teasing out any lessons that might be learnt by an incoming British Labour government.

First, the differences. PASOK is 11 years old, whereas Labour is 85 years old. PASOK is substantially the creation of a single man, Labour the cumulation of its traditions. Greece remains a largely rural country. Its democratic roots are less secure. Its population is one-sixth that of Britain. It is only slowly acquiring the characteristics of a modern, urban-based western political system.

Papandreou's predecessor, Constantine Karamanlis, was 'right-wing' in terms of the shorthand used to define European politicians, but Thatcherite he wasn't. The most substantial act of nationalisation in recent years — Olympic Airways — was carried out under Karamanlis, not Papandreou. Nothing was done while the right (or even the colonels) were in charge to alter the fact that 80 per cent of bank lending is under state control. And it was Karamanlis who pulled Greece out of various NATO exercises.

That last point relates to one of the distinctive and dominating features of Greek politics: its nationalism, especially regarding Turkey. Papandreou's most frequent tactical device when he is in a fix is to play one of his anti-Turkish cards and create some minor, and generally ritualistic, diplomatic incident. It may mean little in the long run, but it goes down well at home.

So much for the main differences. Some fundamental similarities, however, remain. They relate to the practical task of converting left-wing election promises into radical government action. Look at Britain — or France or Greece or New Zealand — in isolation and it is easy to find specific reasons why the socialist sword is so easily blunted. Cynical leaders: ambitious politicians: the seductive trappings of power — any of us could run through the list and say 'if only they had chosen to remain true to their principles', or words to that effect.

I do not believe that is the main, let alone only, explanation for the compromises that all socialist governments in democratic countries have had to make. Nor can the blame be laid solely at the door of Washington or of multinationals like General Motors.

The more relevant and universal point is that the process of government, in almost any country, is a difficult and complicated business in which all sorts of problems interconnect. Radical manifestos prepared from opposition invariably wish away both the difficulties and the interconnections. In 1983 Labour's manifesto promised that we would be simultaneously rude to the Americans (over defence) and to Europe (over the Common Market). Nobody seemed to connect these policies with the probability that at some point a financial crisis would require the active co-operation of the American or German or French central banks, and possibly all three.

(The one occasion I can recall when a left-winger addressed this issue directly was Chris Mullin in one of his novels. His fictitious ministerial hero arranged for a motley group of Arab countries to bail us out. If that's a solution, then I'm Arthur Scargill.)

Inevitably, the result of ill-considered promises colliding with awkward realities is to impede radical change. And the political consequence is that power remains, in effect, with the defenders of the *status quo*. In other words, the right-wingers inside a nominally progressive government recapture the initiative, and there is little that true believers can do but shout and go on strike.

No amount of internal party opposition can ever alter the fundamental fact: real life problems are there, they are often nasty, and it takes far, far more than charismatic leadership and composite resolutions passed by block votes to make them go away. □

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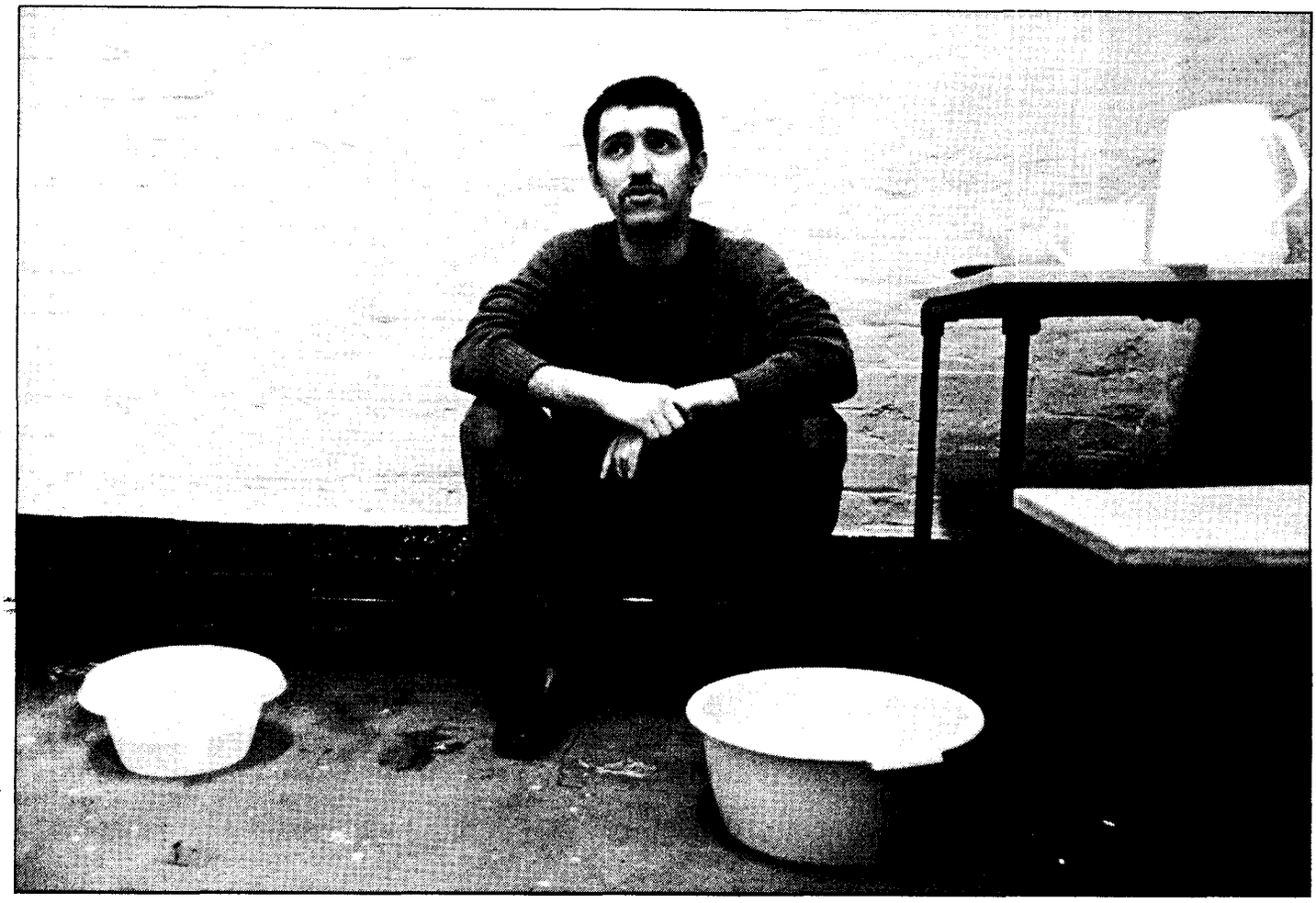

Carlos Guarita/Reflex

APARTHEID AT THE AIRPORTS

LOVELY TO SEE YOU ALL, UNLESS. . .ER. . .THAT IS. . .

If the Conservatives can't be shamed into it, an incoming Labour administration *must* put a stop to the immigration service's exemptions from applying normal rules of justice, argues CHRIS SMITH MP — exemptions which allow Britain's current racist and sexist bullying of Bangladeshis visiting relatives in the UK. Over 70 such visitors are in detention now

IN THE PAST FEW weeks, the unhappy and unpleasant welcome given by Britain's immigration service to many thousands of overseas visitors has had a rare splash of publicity. The concentration has unfortunately been on junior Home Office minister David Waddington's gaffe in the Commons when he spoke of MPs 'abusing' their tacit power to delay individual deportations — and on the subsequent taking-to-task of 23 transgressing MPs for 'misusing' their powers to make representations on behalf of deportees.

The truth behind the headlines is that thousands of people each year are treated appallingly, are discriminated against, are incarcerated without any application of the normal rules of justice, and that there is far too little political concern on the Left about what is happening.

The latest turn of events has arisen, ironically, from the European Court's most recent judgment against Britain, which forced the Home Office to introduce new Immigration Act Rules at the end of August. The new rules are a grudging and inadequate attempt to mitigate the sexually discriminatory nature of immigration control, found by the Court to be in breach of the Convention on Human Rights.

As with all such changes in the regulations governing the right of entry to this country, confusion has resulted. In Bangladesh, it is widely believed that the new rules for permanent entry are more restrictive even than before; and there has been a sudden rush of applications to the British High Commission in consequence. In order to cut down on its workload, the Commission has reminded people simply wanting to visit their relatives in Britain rather than to settle that there is no need to apply for entry clearance in advance.

However, a resultant 350 per cent increase in the number of visitors arriving from Bangladesh at Heathrow has thrown the Home Office into panic. Some 70-80 people from Bangladesh are currently being held in detention centres at Harmondsworth and Ashford and in police cells. All they ever wanted to do was to come and visit relatives and then to return home after a few weeks' stay.

Many of these people are undoubtedly

A punishment cell at Ashford Remand Centre: an Iranian waits to be deported

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genuine visitors with no intention of breaching immigration control. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that they are being locked up as a deterrent to others back in the Indian sub-continent.

Much has been written about the principles of the Immigration Act (assuming that we may use the word 'principles' to describe what is overtly racist legislation). Less comment has been made on the astonishing range of powers of detention which the Act places in the hands of the Home Office. The events of the last couple of months involving people from Bangladesh typify the lack of safeguards and the fact that certain nationals always bear the brunt of the authorities' displeasure. A visitor from Bangladesh is 100 times more likely to be detained than a similar visitor from New Zealand.

Immigration Act detainees divide into two principal categories. There are those people detained at the port of entry as what the Immigration Service terms 'doubtful visitors': the recent surge in Bangladeshi detainees falls into this category. Then there are those arrested and imprisoned prior to deportation, after having entered and lived in this country, often for many years. The specific rules governing each group are different but in both cases the Home Office enjoys extensive powers of detention without reference to a court of law. There is no clear time limit on the period a person may be held, nor are the decisions of the Home Office automatically open to judicial scrutiny. Immigration Act prisoners have no effective right to apply to a court for release. They have no rights at all under the Bail Act.

Immigration Act prisoners — be they port detainees or post-entry prisoners — are at the exclusive disposal of the Home Office. In the words of a recent report by the Prison Reform Trust and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants: 'They are effectively confined to a separate system of justice administered by the Home Office whose rules are distinct from and often alien to the principles and practices of the criminal justice system as a whole.'

EVEN THOUGH Immigration Act prisoners are subject to indefinite periods of administrative detention, outside the normal checks and balances of the criminal justice system, many will find themselves detained within the 'normal' prison system. Each year about 1000 Immigration Act prisoners are crammed into prison department establishments. There they face not only the routine squalor that characterises virtually all our prisons, but they also have to cope with the particular pressures placed upon them by the Act itself.

Many will never see any notice authorising their detention. Most will have been arrested by the police or the Immigration Authorities without any proper explanation of the reason for arrest. Once in prison, Immigration Act prisoners may easily wait a week before receiving any information about their deportation. Indeed, those prisoners treated as illegal entrants will usually receive no clear reasons for either detention or removal. Not a very nice welcome to Britain for someone who perhaps speaks little or no English and has no understanding of the system detaining them. The current shortage of interpreters only serves to increase the periods of detention.

The other main places of detention are Immigration Service detention centres, the largest of which is at Harmondsworth on the edge of Heathrow Airport. These centres are actually run by Securicor, but the relationship between the company and the Home Office is obscure and no system of public accountability exists. According to information released by the Home Office in 1978, Securicor staff receive only one extra day's training if they are to work with the Immigration Service.

The use of a private security firm to run such detention centres is, to say the least, a glaring anomaly in the operation of the penal system. Despite this, the conditions and facilities in most Immigration Service detention centres are superior to those prevalent in prisons. (The obvious exception is the Queen's Building in Terminal 2 at Heathrow, which squeezes five bedrooms housing fifteen people into a corridor without natural light or air, and has been almost universally condemned as a disgrace.) Given the administrative nature of Immigration Act detention, the use of prisons for these purposes is indefensible. At the very least their use should be ended when Ashford Remand Centre, the main prison where Immigration Act prisoners are detained, closes in March 1987.

Despite some lacklustre attempts on the part of the Home Office to present a more favourable image (that word 'presentation' again), immigration control remains the most scandalous aspect of British public administration. Yet the arcane rules and regulations and the uniquely vulnerable situation of the victims have hitherto served to mask the extent of the scandal. Unhappily, the record of Labour governments (with the notable exception of Alex Lyon's efforts when Minister of State) has not been particularly impressive either; and the scandal has persisted as a result.

The anger currently felt by Bangladeshis in my constituency and elsewhere at the treatment of friends and relatives who wish to visit them demonstrates the moral bankruptcy of the Tory claim that 'firm but fair immigration control' leads to better race relations. A future Labour government must ensure that all powers of detention and deportation are reviewable by the courts. Rights of appeal and to release on bail must be introduced. The use of prisons as places of detention must be ended. And the racist discriminatin against black and Asian visitors and deportees must cease once for all.

The crude racial stereotyping which underlies immigration control procedures is not only a moral affront but a trial of the Labour party's commitment to the interests of the ethnic minority communities in this country. In few other areas are the issues of social justice and human rights so clear cut. And sadly, in few other areas is our record thus far so lamentable. □

Chris Smith is Labour MP for Islington South and Finsbury, and chair of the Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice. A public meeting organised by the Campaign will be held on Tuesday 12 November at 7pm in the Grand Committee Room of the House of Commons, to discuss Home Office powers of detention under the Immigration Act.

MYOPIA

UNIONISTS FALL INTO IRA TRAP

Derek Speirs/Report

Protestant councillors have united to 'suspend' local government in protest at having to sit with elected representatives belonging to Sinn Fein. PADDY DEVLIN (above) fears this tactic will add to pressure to ban Sinn Fein altogether, making a political solution to Ulster's problems even more remote

THE PACT BETWEEN the two Unionist parties to block Sinn Fein on Northern Ireland's local councils is myopic in the short term and probably disastrous for them in the long term.

It was understandable that the Unionist population needed reassurance in the face of Sinn Fein's big advance in the council elections last May (*NS* 24 May). But Sinn Fein could have had roughly the same number of seats in the past, if not more, had they decided to contest elections as a party. The seats were always there for the taking, having been kept warm for some years by Independent Nationalists of one sort or another. Certainly there was never any cause for the Unionists to panic on hearing the election results.

In the cold light of day, which the Unionist parties should have waited for, the announcement of the pact can only be judged as hasty and ill-conceived. Its impact on the political life of Northern Ireland was not thought out. The important thing about the pact is that it does not work. The reason, which the Unionists appear to have overlooked, is that councillors have rights — underpinned by custom and practice, statutory law and council standing orders — which entitle them to sit on committees and attend council meetings, where they can move and second motions, speak and vote on relevant matters and, in unison with a

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number of other councillors, convene special council meetings to deal with relevant business.

No political party can deny other councillors this right. Sinn Fein councillors have already sought redress in the courts. One councillor forced the Belfast City Council to lift his indefinite suspension for referring to the union jack as a 'butcher's apron'. Several weeks ago opposition councillors in Craigavon, who were refused the right to attend council meetings, successfully secured High Court backing to do so. The council majority as a result suspended all council activities and narrowly avoided being in contempt of court.

THIS DUBIOUS TACTIC of suspending council activities has been picked up by Newtownabbey, Newtonards, Cookstown, Armagh, Antrim, North Down and Lisburn councils. What is surprising about this is that Antrim, North Down and Newtownabbey councils have no Sinn Fein members, Armagh has one and the others have only two out of 20 members or more. The effect of Sinn Fein on council business would have been little more than peripheral, had the Unionists not dramatised the situation.

In councils such as Derry, Fermanagh, Newry, and Magherafelt, where Nationalist parties are in a majority, the SDLP is compelled, because of pressure from the Unionists, to vote on a tribal basis. That means, at times, that Sinn Fein nominees can be sent to public boards such as the Housing Council, Health, Libraries and Education Boards, and be represented on delegations to Ministers.

Meanwhile the SDLP, vying for the same vote as Sinn Fein, is in danger of losing out in Catholic urban areas. Certainly it would be fatal for it, or indeed any social democratic party, to allow itself to be driven away from its natural base into rural areas where clerics, big farmers and their professional hangers-on dominate. A party such as the SDLP may survive for a time in rural areas but history would be against it.

In the aftermath of the election campaign, which involved very vicious exchanges, usually initiated by paramilitary organisations on both sides against other opposition parties in urban 'ghetto' areas, there was a chance for the opposition parties to align themselves against Sinn Fein violence. It was not in the SDLP's interest, as the largest Nationalist party, to become a bedfellow of Sinn Fein. Nor, for that matter, was it in the interest of the smaller Alliance or the even smaller Workers' parties.

At the election counts a senior member of the SDLP said that it saw its best interest being served by a rigid separation from Sinn Fein. The right option for the Unionists to consider, in the light of that public statement by the SDLP, was to seek out the common ground for legitimate democratic policies and to isolate Sinn Fein in the process. It should have been abundantly clear even to them that the gulf between the parties that support the democratic process and Sinn Fein is unbridgeable.

Sinn Fein would have been placed outside the Pale by the offer of serious talks by the Unionists to opposition parties. The vast majority of Roman Catholics, approximately 330,000 out of a possible vote of 410,000, did not vote for Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA. They would for the first time, if the opposition parties had accepted the proposition, be mobilised effectively against Sinn Fein. The Unionists, by their stupidity in forcing their pact on councils which were still operational, have turned them into Towers of Babel.

Unionists seem to have forgotten that the primary objective of Sinn Fein in seeking election to councils was to disturb the working of the administrations to the extent that commissioners would have to be put in by the Minister of the Environment to run them. Sinn Fein have to do no more than raise a flag on a public building in a Catholic area or hijack the opening of a new leisure facility to set the Unionists 'bonkers'.

Unionist reaction was a heaven-sent gift for Sinn Fein. They never anticipated allies like these on the other side. Their propaganda machine proclaims to the world that the North of Ireland is ungovernable — as it has been for years under the Unionists, and now under the British. And Sinn Fein, they emphasise, is the only fit agency in Northern Ireland to make a fist of running its affairs.

Sinn Fein hardly anticipated when they started out in their election campaign, that the Unionists themselves would wind up delivering their policy for them. But that is precisely the effect of the Unionist pact. □

Paddy Devlin is a founder member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Catholic moderate-left party, which he chairs. He was a minister in the power-sharing Executive in 1974, a member consecutively of the Stormont parliament, the Assembly and the Convention, and a Belfast councillor for 14 years until defeated this May.

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10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

IT'S THAT SECRET BASE AGAIN

WHEN THE LID BLEW

Seven years ago DUNCAN CAMPBELL was in the dock of the Old Bailey's court 1 when the present Director of Public Prosecutions mounted a crude attempt to put pressure on the judge to accept that even the existence of Britain's 'sigint' spy unit in Cyprus — 9 Signal regiment — was so secret that it could not be mentioned in open court. The farce of secrecy surrounding Ayios Nikolaos base in eastern Cyprus continues, as we saw in the £5 million case which ended last week with the acquittal of all seven defendants after a four-month trial conducted almost entirely *in camera*

THE 'ABC' (Aubrey, Berry and Campbell) Official Secrets Act trial in 1978 centred on the charge that former Intelligence Corps corporal John Berry, an analyst at Britain's signals intelligence base in Cyprus, had passed on secret information during an interview with the other two defendants, Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey, then journalists working for *Time Out*.

During the trial, overt government pressure was put on the trial judge to suppress the identity of 9 Signal Regiment.

There were in fact two ABC trials. The first ended abruptly after it was disclosed that the foreman of the jury, whose members had been carefully vetted by the Special Branch, was by remarkable coincidence a former SAS soldier who had served in Cyprus.

During this first trial, however, evidence was given in open court about the existence and purpose of the spy base at Ayios Nikolaos. A former regimental security officer admitted, to prosecution dismay, that the work and location of the base were not secret. This evidence was reported in the *Guardian* on 8 September 1978.

Almost a month later, on Friday 6 October

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Colonel Hugh Johnstone, former commander of the Cyprus intelligence base and 'Don of the communications underworld'

1978, the second ABC trial had reached the same point. During cross-examination of the former security officer from Ayios Nikolaos, trial judge Mr Justice Mars-Jones heard a prosecution objection to identifying 9 Signal Regiment in open court and overruled it. He accepted that it was already public knowledge from earlier hearings.

The prosecution at once applied, successfully, for an adjournment. When the court reconvened some hours later, a phalanx of prominent government legal and security officials had formed behind the prosecution benches. They included the Attorney General's top Legal Assistant, Mr Gerald Adams; the Legal Adviser to the Security service, Mr Bernard Sheldon; a senior official from GCHQ itself, and the Director of Public Prosecutions himself, Sir Thomas Hetherington, in person — his first and only appearance at the trial.

Coincident with this sudden and overt display of state concern, Mr Justice Mars-Jones wavered. The prosecution claimed that disclosure of its role as a British electronic intelligence base would embarrass the Greek Cypriot government. Discussion was adjourned over the weekend, so that witnesses on this matter could be called on Monday.

The defence countered that, not only was the base well known locally as a monitoring centre, but mentioning the fact in court would be no embarrassment to the Cypriot government. The then press counsellor for the Cypriot High Commission, George Lanitis, contacted Nicosia and was authorised to confirm this view. Now working for the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, Lanitis has told the *New Statesman* that the functions of Ayios Nikolaos had always been 'a common secret' in Cyprus. Cypriots are 'very well aware' of what goes on there, he said last week.

ON THE MONDAY, however, the prosecution made a formal statement on behalf of the Foreign Office. It stated that the Greek Cypriot government *would* be embarrassed if the court were openly to refer to the base. This statement was untrue. But no Foreign Office witness was even heard, let alone cross-examined on it.

Foreign Office officials certainly did not bother to ask the Foreign Secretary for permission to intervene in this way. Dr David Owen told the *New Statesman* he had no recollection of the issue being raised with him, nor was he asked to authorise the statement made in court on behalf of his department.

In the continued presence of top legal officials, the judge refused to hear evidence that the existence of the base was not a secret. 'I don't need evidence', he said. He did 'not think that evidence could usefully be called [to show that] statements made by the Crown on behalf of the Foreign office are untrue. I must accept the statement by responsible counsel on behalf of government departments'. Newspaper articles, such as the *Guardian*'s earlier report of the trial, were just dismissed as 'hearsay'.

The judge refused to accept an affidavit sworn by Chris Price, then MP for Lewisham, and an expert on Cypriot affairs. By this time, also, Lanitis had been informed — he does not recall by whom — that it would be against normal practice for diplomats to give evidence in court. The Foreign Office statement was permitted to stand, and for the next six weeks of the trial the Army's 9 Signal Regiment at Ayios Nikolaos became the anonymous 'Unit A'.

The Cyprus government was not told in advance of the statement made by the Foreign Office (ie GCHQ) in its name. Chris Price, now assistant director of the South Bank Polytechnic, said this week that 'the only inference' he could draw from the sudden arrival in court of Sir Thomas Hetherington and the others was that it was 'the clearest possible signal of serious government concern about the judge's ruling'.

From the very start of the case, the prosecution had insisted on having anonymous witnesses too. GCHQ's expert witness on sigint was to be one Lieutenant Colonel 'A'. But when they were told that Lt-Col A's real name would have to be divulged to defence lawyers, Colonel B — real name Colonel Hugh Johnstone — was substituted instead.

Colonel Johnstone was quickly identified from army magazines as the former commander of the Cyprus base. The Royal Signals magazine *Wire* had even published a profile, identifying him as the 'Don of the communications underworld'. His name was discovered and published by the *Journalist* and *Leveller* magazines.

In response, the DPP launched contempt proceedings against the magazines, which he finally lost on appeal in the House of Lords. At the height of these hearings, Colonel 'B' was deliberately named by MPs during Question Time in the House of Commons. His identity was thus revealed, four times, broadcast live to 5 million BBC radio listeners.

But the DPP still thought that Colonel B's name should be secret. Heatherington telexed Fleet Street newspapers, threatening them that to reveal the name would be a contempt of court. But the bubble was burst. Hetherington was almost universally attacked for his folly; some MPs wanted him cited for contempt of parliament. All ignored his strictures about publishing the Colonel's name.

Then when in court Colonel B's evidence of alleged damage to British sigint activities collapsed completely, the prosecution suddenly wanted to produce another witness — Mr 'C', a senior Director of GCHQ Cheltenham, whose name was so absolutely secret that it could not be revealed even to the judge.

But by then Mr Justice Mars-Jones had finally had enough. He told the prosecution in no uncertain terms that it should drop the 'Section 1' charges of spying. Mr C need not attend, and the screens and alphabet soup of a trial over 9 Signal was over — until 1985. □

Research by Patrick Forbes.

ROOM TO BREATHE

WHO FEELS IT, KNOWS IT. . .

As Rev Jesse Jackson comes and goes and as efforts accelerate to waken the conscience of a white government — our own — to its racism, Black women struggle on for elbow room. ZHANA tells it

I HATED writing this article. I hate the idea of explaining to a mostly white readership just what it is that Black women organise around. Even worse, I resent the implication that Black women have to explain why we choose to organise autonomously.

The move for Black women's groups is a move for self-determination. Full stop. Self-determination is what we are about. Black women have a history of having our priorities defined by others, by both the empowered and the oppressed, convinced of their right to dictate to us. The perspective derives from a colonialist mentality.

Take one example. In groups of our own Black women find the space to discuss our sexuality, a marginal subject in male-dominated Black groups. Amos and Parmar pointed out in 'Challenging Imperialist Feminism', *Feminist Review* July 1984, that sexuality is defined by white women in ways that exclude our unique experience. The fact that Black women's sexuality has been systematically devalued by a society which labels all Black women prostitutes or sexually 'loose' has had grave implications for our communities.

Such labelling contributes to many Black families, and especially young Black single mothers, being deemed unfit and disproportionately likely to have their children taken into care. Our groups are also all too often called upon to support Black women who allege that they have been sexually assaulted by the police — the most recent case being that of Jackie Berkley (*NS* 22 March). And Black

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Val Wilmer/Format

Creating the space to meet on common ground

lesbians who have to cope with soul-destroying homophobia in the wider Black community can often find support in Black women's groups.

Some newly formed projects include a Black women incest survivors' group, a group for Black kids in care, and a Black women's alcoholism group. All of these have been developed on the basis that Black women address our concerns more closely, more accurately and more caringly than anyone else does or could do.

The issues which Black women's groups address may often differ only slightly from the concerns of white women's or male-dominated Black organisations. The difference is that in our own groups we can develop our own political theory in a supportive atomosphere, one in which we do not waste our energy and scarce time arguing over things we consider to be fundamental. Many Black women's groups have made a priority of campaigns against the deportation of women victimised by sexist and racist immigration laws (*see also this issue p.10*). Although other groups also mobilise around these issues, Black women's support is the fastest to arrive, the furthest reaching, the most comprehensive and the longest lasting, because 'who feels it knows it'.

I have seen white-dominated Left groups arguing over issues which Black women take as given — because our analysis comes, not from abstract theorising, but from our everyday experience. And while white male leftists who define struggle in Marxist terms feel that their analysis justifies treating issues specific to race and sex as marginal, Black men, because of the severity of their own racial oppression, often feel free to dismiss Black women's separate concerns as irrelevant. So Black women's groups provide a forum in which Black women can confront and challenge Black men's sexism *outside* a context which gives white people ammunition to use against Black men.

We have acted to set up support groups for Black women in refuges who have survived living with violent men only to encounter white feminists' racism; and have brought Black women's refuges into existence.

MUCH HAS BEEN written over the last ten or twelve years criticising the racism of the white women's movement. I think this is partly because many Black women had put their faith in a movement which purported to represent all women, only to find that we were being exploited and lied to once again, this time by people calling themselves our 'sisters'. Some of the most recent critiques of feminist racism, eg. Amos and Parmar, and Lee and K.'s 'Womynism' in the *Camden and Islington Black Sisters Newsletter*, March 1985, have been criticised by Black and white women for lambasting the white women's movement without sufficiently pointing the way forward. I disagree with this criticism on two counts.

First, Black women's experience is such that we have every right to criticise racism in the women's movement as well as wherever else we detect it till the cows come home. We have obviously not made enough criticism of feminist racism since we are *still* pointing out instances of it to white women who are no more tired of hearing about it than we are of encountering it each and every day. And second, I feel the way forward has been clearly outlined in both the articles I've cited. To many Black women, the *essence* of our struggle lies in finding, fighting and eliminating racism in every aspect of our lives. Although many of us resent the amount of time and energy we have to expend in reacting to others' racism, it is surely up to us to determine when this work no longer needs to be done.

One interesting development to come out of Black women's organising is the analysis of how racism and sexism work together to form a unique oppression. Black women's groups may focus on the fact that Black women's legitimate employment is almost exclusively restricted to domestic work and the nursing profession; or on the marketing of bleaching creams and hair straighteners as Black 'beauty' products; both of which are examples, not only of racism or of sexism, but of how they combine.

Not surprisingly, images of Black women provide a recurrent theme for Black women's groups. Black women talk about our hair ad infinitum. A people who have consistently had few or no positive images of ourselves to use as role models, who have been defined multitudinous times according to how we were seen through others' eyes, Black women are at last coming together to create our own images of ourselves.

IN THE PAST three years, Black women's writing groups and publishing projects have sprung up which emphasise the importance of Black women recording our lives as we see them, through our eyes, sharing them through our unique voices in our individual styles. This is the first time such a movement has ever occurred. It was created in part by white feminist publishing houses which found it profitable to publish the work of a few Black women stars.

For the first time, Black women writers and potential writers have many powerful role models to look to *in print*; it is trendy for Black women to write and we can do so with the knowledge that our work has a ready audience, to the point that white publishing houses are even considering publishing those of us who aren't exactly famous. We are gaining autonomous control to publish our own work, which will eliminate the necessity to write what white women want to read about us.

Several Black women's theatre groups have recently been formed. They add to the positive images which Black women are creating and recording about ourselves and our lives. For example, Theatre of Black Women's production, 'Pyeyucca', and Munira's new show, 'On the Inside'. The Black women's newsletter *We are Here* gives Black women the space to talk to each other about current events and mutual concerns. The Black Women's Writing Workshop helps Black women who do not necessarily consider themselves to be writers to gain confidence in their self-expression, and to form their own ongoing writing groups. Last year, Sankofa Black film collective held a successful series of films and discussions.

BLACK WOMEN'S conferences have proliferated recently, dealing with such topics as Black women's use of and access to the media, Black feminism, Black women's writing, and Black women prisoners. This year, three Black women's days were held to celebrate International Women's Week.

The warmth and closeness of a Black women's conference can make it resemble a family gathering. But old family feuds and differences sometimes emerge. I hate the differences that come between us, and knowing that they are imposed on us from the outside by a powerful and exploitative society does not always make me feel any better. There is much distrust among a people who have been taught for so long to hate ourselves that we shrink from our reflections in each other's faces. I am grateful to belong to a generation in which we have private forums in which to explore and resolve our family differences.

The very fact that Black women's groups exist is a positive step for all Black women — those who choose to organise autonomously and those who do not. Whenever I see a sister who has been isolated, living in a white community, the need is brought home to me even more forcefully. Through our groups, we as Black women develop confidence in ourselves and each other. We create space, to meet on common ground, to discuss or to ignore issues of our choice. □

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MEDIA

'Rambollocks' is the order of the day

JOHN ELLIS

IT'S A GOLDEN rule of film criticism that you should never write about a film you've not seen. I'm breaking that rule by writing about one film I'll not go to see for a long time: *Rambo*. *Rambo* is two phenomena: one, a successful film breaking some (but by no means all) box office records; two, a headline writers' word.

In this second guise, it has even crept into the *New Statesman*'s editorial pages. 'Rambo' is everywhere: it is the key word describing the American intervention into the *Achille Lauro* affair; it describes the experiences of a kitten accidentally sent round inside a washing machine (my local freesheet); it prompts the tabloids to search for the 'roughest, toughest youngster', to be dubbed, inevitably, a 'Rambino'.

'Rambo' is a good headline word, short, recognisable, infinitely punnable, comfortingly infantile. So are many other words, even film titles. There has to be an extra ingredient which singles out this film title and promotes it into the everyday shorthand of tired journalism. For the use of 'Rambo' spreads far wider than *Rambo* the film: far more people recognise the inchoate bunch of meanings that it invokes than will ever see the film.

'Rambo' has replaced 'macho', a discredited term. 'Rambo' means the assertion of male aggression, regardless of its effects, in order to attain your goal. So Ramboing can involve anything from a 'legal' hijack by a superpower to a radio DJ getting tough with a night club bouncer or Ronnie Corbett scaring off a six-foot burglar in his 'luxurious South London home'. Being Ramboed on the other hand, is not a much reported experience.

Behind the current rash of Ramboness is a stark ideological operation. A particularly vicious version of male behaviour is being rehabilitated: before 'Rambo', there was no convenient word to lump together (in headlines) the aspects of direct physical violence as a praiseworthy way of achieving your desires at someone else's expense.

However ironically the left press might use the term in relation to Reagan, this is the import of 'Rambo', and it has become a key word in a resurgence of reactionary male characteristics in the popular press.

Not everything is 'Rambo'. The darkest side of male aggression is not connected with the term. It is not 'Rambo' to beat up your baby when it annoys you. The term 'Rambo' is withheld from accounts of the violence inflicted upon battered children by their fathers, so this violence is not seen as essentially the same as that perpetrated by our 'Rambo' heroes. 'Rambo' aggression and male aggression against children are not connected, although the one is promoted and the other condemned on opposite pages of the same newspaper.

How does this ideological operation connect with the film *Rambo*? The film is almost completely irrelevant to it, except insofar as it provides raw material, an initial definition of 'Rambo' that is subsequently elaborated in its use by the press.

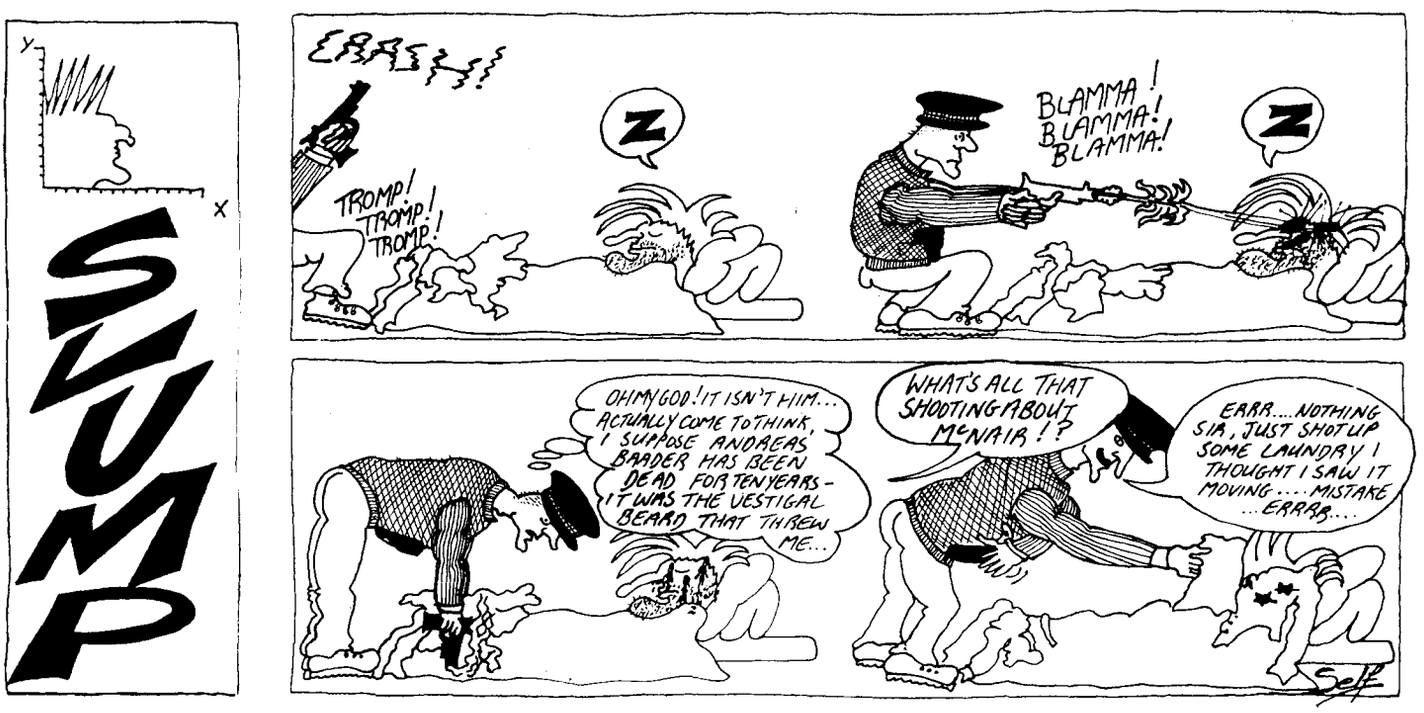
All that remains of the film in current 'Rambo' is an iconic picture of Sylvester Stallone, stripped to the waist, muscles oiled and bulging, gritting his teeth as he fires his machine gun from where his penis ought to be. An icon of male aggression, then, clearly implying the hysterical compensation for a felt lack of virility. But the icon is not offered to be *read* (especially not as a hysterical symptom), it merely signals 'Rambo' — a term of approval.

The film provided raw material for 'Rambo'; and the marketing of the film provided the ideal means for 'Rambo' to spread itself in our culture. *Rambo* was shown twice to a thousand-strong audience three months before its release. The invited audience included some film critics, but was mostly feature journalists, radio DJs, columnists: the chatterers of journalistic culture. And, obediently, they chattered about it in the three months leading up to the film's release.

This is a special marketing strategy, reaching well beyond the usual people whose function it is to preview films. A controversy was stirred up even before these mass previews, around Reagan's well-publicised endorsement of 'Rambo', and this controversy ensured that journalism's chatterers would feel themselves privileged to have seen the film well in advance of their public. A similar strategy was used to make *ET* into a massive cultural phenomenon. But *ET*, though male, was no *Rambo*.

So 'Rambo' was well established by the time *Rambo* arrived. If we didn't need to see *Rambo* in order to understand 'Rambo', then I don't see much reason for seeing the film myself. For the film (whatever it does or says) has not had much effect on anyone.

It provided some raw material, an excuse, for a massive ideological rehabilitation of some very unpleasant male characteristics. For this, the marketing of the film is to blame, the public image of it that has been circulated. Perhaps, when I do see *Rambo* in five years' time, I'll be surprised by the depth of its analysis of male aggression. I doubt it. □


Y
X
SLUMP
ERRR?!
TROMP! TROMP! TROMP!
Z
BLAMMA! BLAMMA! BLAMMA!
Z
OH MY GOD! IT ISN'T HIM... ACTUALLY COME TO THINK, I SUPPOSE ANDREAS BADER HAS BEEN DEAD FOR TEN YEARS - IT WAS THE VESTIGAL BEARD THAT THREW ME...
WHAT'S ALL THAT SHOOTING ABOUT MCNAIR!?
ERRR.... NOTHING SIR, JUST SHOT UP SOME LAUNDRY I THOUGHT I SAW IT MOVING.... MISTAKE ...ERRRR...
Self

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DIARY

Alison Hennegan

Cambridge
Tuesday, 5 November

Ah well, we've failed again, I see. That first time in 1605 was a Tuesday too. Not, of course, that I really approve of violent measures against the elected legislature. Well, not *really* really.

Although my thoughts do run on violence these days. I *think* it's temporary. It's certainly intimately connected with the start of another academic year. The town is full of undergraduate and student young, confidently jamming pavements and looking pained when asked to move, blithely cycling the wrong way up streets. Their airy disregard reduces me to the sort of person I'd prefer not to know. Snarling as I swerve, I yell 'FOOL!' at unwary male jay-walkers. In prim but clarion bazaar-opening tones I find myself giving what, in honesty, I can only describe as Ticking Orffs ('You really *must* learn to be more careful!') to unnerved young women whose co-ordination is poor and knowledge of the Highway Code non-existent. Understandably, they resent me. Deplorably, they cower nonetheless.

Xenophobia pestis, like the hard native perennial it is, bourgeons as lordly young Mediterranean male cyclists sail into oncoming traffic with such signorial arrogance that even as we swear and skid we look round wildly for street signs to see if he's right and we're wrong and the one-way system's undergone one of its periodic reversals. (He isn't. We aren't. It hasn't.)

○

Discerning readers will already have realised that my animus is not really directed at newcomers or foreigners but at the young. One of this year's more shaming, most painful discoveries has been that youth is now Other to me. Just eighteen months ago, at 35, I saw myself at the older end of Young. Now, at 37, I feel the younger end of Old. Youth may not be an enemy but I feel an uneasy sense of armed neutrality towards it. Eighteen months ago such sentiments expressed by slightly older friends struck me as sad — unwitting revelations of unacknowledged jealousies and unexamined self-contempt. They still do. The hostility goes, of course, the moment I actually meet and talk to any individual young. But however quickly it's dissipated, the knowledge that it was there at all marks an unwelcome, insufficiently combatted change.

○

Chastening. I cheer myself with the thought that at least one recent fear has proved groundless. Ever since HRH's incognito sojourns amongst London's destitute street-dwellers (and all those delightfully disingenuous statements about the non-political nature of his disquiet), I've been bracing myself for Mrs Thatcher to come back fighting with yet another modification of her wearyingly reworked image. Were we, I wondered, about to see the Iron Lady, now recast as Mother of the Nation, clad in the Caring Person's garb — disposable designer cardboard? But some things, it seems, are spared us. So far.

○

Designer sackcloth, ashes optional, are what I'd *like* to see her wearing. Especially since a recent conversation which enlightened me about one, doubtless unrecorded, form of educational cuts: the deaths of highly placed academics who, finding the task of destroying subjects, departments and colleagues intolerable, have destroyed themselves instead. Remembering that my informant was a cleric and mindful that it was a Sunday, I said tentatively that although it wasn't a very Christian sentiment, I could have wished that they had destroyed other, more culpable, people first. 'Quite!', said the scholar-clergyman with enthusiasm. The Church militant once more.

○

But not, mercifully, as militant as that unspeakable vicar plastered over the *Sun* a little while ago. Posed *a la* Rambo, all sneer and thrust, standing on an apocalyptic hill-top and conveniently aureoled by the rising sun, he aimed the barrels of his shotgun at the head of his undertandably embarrassed teenage son. No need to worry, though. The headlines reassured us. This man would shoot his son if he were homosexual. If he was homosexual and had AIDS, papa would shoot the whole family.

Some Mid West nut, I said to myself (xenophobia: see above), until a less prejudiced

friend pointed silently to the word 'Humberside'. 'Sometimes', said the son poignantly, 'I think Dad would like to shoot me whether I was homosexual or not.' Very likely. And does his bishop know?

○

And, by a natural progression. . . . The RAF motto, I seem to remember, is *Per ardua ad astra* — the sort of thing Molesworth's younger brother would probably translate as 'Through harshness, you shall see stars.' And, following recent revelations from Cyprus, which amongst us would venture to correct him?

○

But then, as we all know, when cats are away mice play — particularly in Old Street. At number 386, to be precise, where the Women's Press Bookclub is temporarily housed. I've not yet had a colleague's experience, still shudderingly recalled, of absentmindedly picking up a telephone receiver and finding that it was warm, furry and indignant. Nevertheless we've all grown blasée about swirling mice out of the paperclips, shooing them off the staplers and evicting them from the Cushion-Wrap.

Humane, but cursing, we regularly ferry them over Shoreditch High Street (five lanes, all lethal) and shoot them into the churchyard. Apologetic but determined they return, their numbers augmented by new offspring, old friends and camp followers. Speculatively they eye the bookclub stock, nests all too clearly in mind. Skirting *The Anti-Social Family* (how rude!), drawn briefly to *The Chinese Garden* (so exotic), turning their backs huffily on *Why Children?* (so pointed), they ponder the relative merits of *Pure Lust* (clearly superfluous), *Reproductive Rituals* (ditto) and *In My Mother's House* (so *friendly*).

We, on the other hand, find the titles tell a different story. For with *One Thing Leading To Another*, the days of *No Immediate Danger* are long past. Faced as we are with *The Rising Tide*, fastidiously eschewing the easy answer of *Murder in the Collective*, for us and the mice, clearly, it's time for *A Reckoning*. Something's got to give. In the end, after all, for women, mice, men and Mrs Thatcher, it's just *A Question of Power*.

ROGER WODDIS

Pass the salt

Vitaly Yurchenko, the Soviet KGB officer who claims he was kidnapped by the CIA in Rome, says he discussed matters of 'general interest' with CIA director William Casey over lunch.

'How do you like Virginia, Vitaly?
A little salad to go with your grill?'
'It's good to have such a friendly parley,
And thanks for making me welcome, Bill.'

'Any complaints on the way you're treated?
Do you want the laces back in your shoes?'
'I'm safe as houses — they're so well-heated —
And I'm enjoying this frank exchange of
views.'

'Tell me, read any good books lately?
What was the weather like in Rome?'
'This stuff is strong, it moves me greatly —
Who needs the vodka we get at home?'

'The chances of peace between our two
nations —
How do you see them in general terms?'
'I hear you, Bill, but regarding relations,
Let's not open that can of worms.'

'A toast to the summit, and down with the
curtain;
As the Latins say, there's truth in wine.'
'To tell you the truth, I'm not quite certain —
Am I on your side, or are you on mine?'

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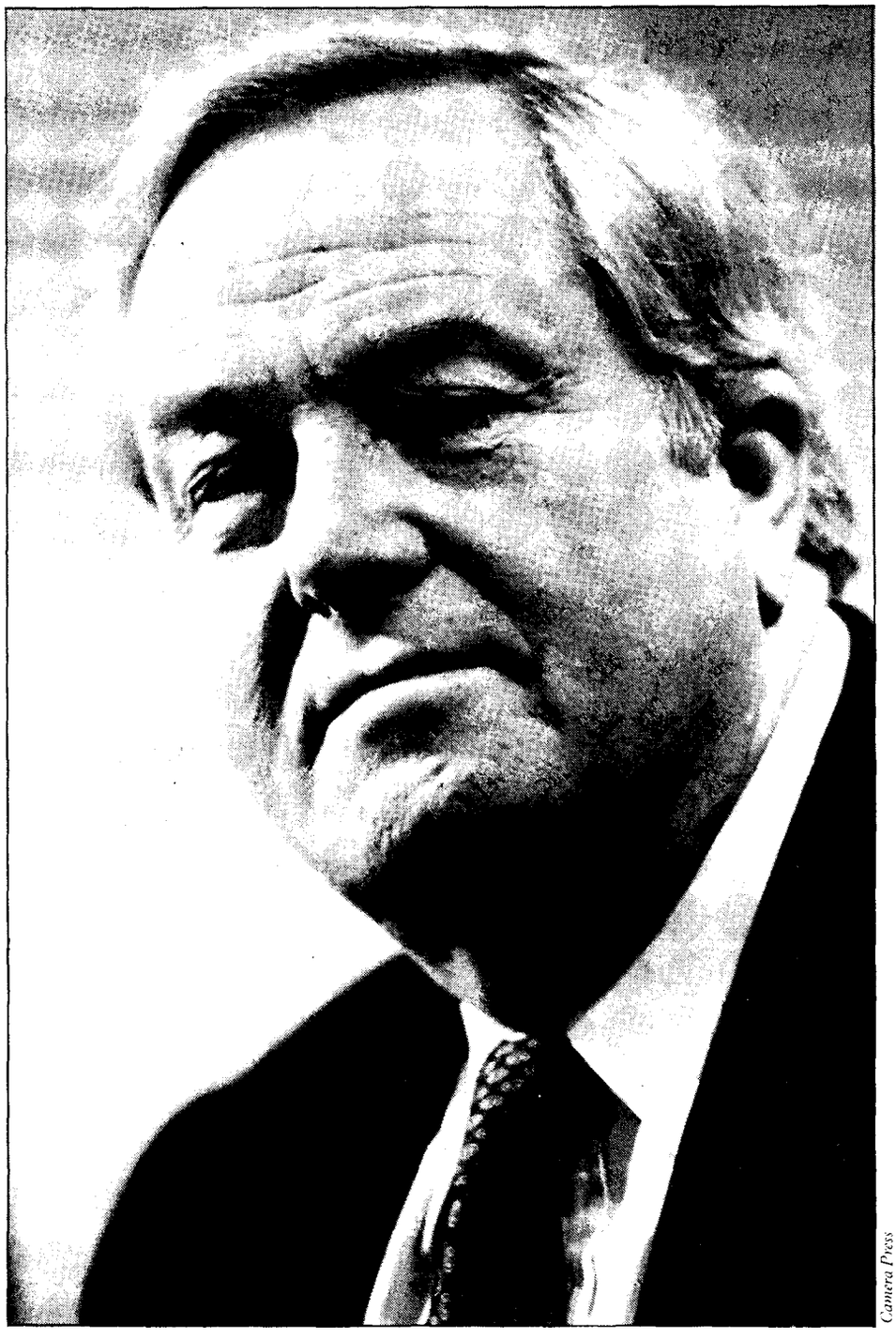

Camera Press

THEY'RE ALL AFRAID OF THE BIG, BAD WOLF

As the critical 1986 legislature elections draw nearer, the orthodox parties of the French Right are running scared of Le Pen (above) and his National Front. PAUL HAINSWORTH reports on their continuing rise

IN 1976 Jean-Marie Le Pen and his family were housekeepers and close confidants of an extreme right winger, called Hubert Lambert. The will that Lambert left behind turned the leader of France's neo-fascist party, the National Front (NF), into a very rich man.

Last month Lambert's then doctor, Jean-Marie Demarquet — Algerian militant, ex-fellow Poujadist MP and longstanding friend — publicly criticised the way in which Le Pen handled Lambert's final illness and his finances — as a result of which Le Pen now owns a fortune and a chateau. He is also in serious trouble with the authorities for non-payment of taxes on the estate.

But none of this has upset the onward march of his party. It has continued to build on its spectacular success in the 1984 Euro-elections, when it got almost 11 per cent of the vote and achieved 10 MEPs. Its spectacular Red, White and Blue (BBR) festival last month at Le Bourget Airport in Paris — the fifth — capped a year and a half of intense activity, designed to consolidate the advances that Le Pen's party has made. The other main political parties — the 'gang of four' as Le Pen calls them — have been forced to come to terms with the right-wing phenomenon.

After the European elections, the NF concentrated on its party organisation and electioneering. In some areas grassroots activity began virtually from scratch. Elsewhere, for example in Paris and the south, membership was fairly well established, if not numerous.

The Euro-election result led to a flood of recruits, including many disillusioned converts from traditional right-wing parties. Party membership jumped from a few thousands before 1984, to 20,000 (September 1984) then to 65,000 by 1985 — at a minimum of £16 a head. Overnight NF leaders, some of whom had spent years kicking around the fringes of extreme right sectarianism, were political stars: at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, packed massed meetings, well subscribed dinner debates, working commissions of doctors and employers. By early 1985, the party was turning out a twice monthly broadsheet, *The Letter of Jean-Marie Le Pen*, and the revamped weekly *National Hebdo* was gaining new readers.

Its 1984 election success encouraged the NF to contest the 1985 cantonal (county council) elections. In 1982, the NF fielded 62 candidates with negligible impact. In March 1985, it had some 1,500 candidates contesting 78 per cent of the seats. On the first ballot, the NF took 8.5 per cent of the vote, running particularly strong in some urban areas.

The cantonal elections provided a good indicator of how the traditional right-wing parties would face the NF challenge. In the past, notably in the 1983 municipal (local) elections, some right-wing politicians 'compromised' with the NF to oust the Left from office. Right-wing complicity with the NF was very much in evidence after the Regional Election of August 1984, when the Gaullist (RPR) Right only wrested leadership of the Corsican Assembly from the Left by buying off NF regional councillors.

The general line from the RPR and

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Giscardian UDF, though, was no contracts or compromises with the NF. Some right-wing politicians in electoral difficulty were prepared to accommodate the NF — for example in Marseilles, an NF bastion, where Jean-Claude Gaudin, the UDF's parliamentary leader, hoped to upset longstanding socialist control of the city.

For a while, even Raymond Barre — premier under President Giscard and now the most popular right-wing politician — was prepared to receive Le Pen and adopt a 'soft' line on the NF. The latest breach in the official policy of 'non-recognition' occurred in the recent New Caledonian elections in the Pacific, when the local RPR was willing to meet Le Pen although the Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac studiously avoided the NF president when their electoral tours of the island coincided.

In New Caledonia, as in Corsica, the NF won a few seats and since mid-April has been polling in line with its 1984 vote. Commentators are no longer making comparisons with the flash Poujadist protest vote of the mid-1950s. A further bonus for the NF has been the willingness of the National Centre of Independents and Peasants (CNIP) — a small right-wing party — to argue for the inclusion of the NF in the opposition 'family' of political parties against the Left.

NOW THE MARCH 1986 parliamentary elections are the sole concern of all political parties. With the change in the electoral system from majority voting to PR, there is a real likelihood of the NF winning 30 or more seats and holding the balance in a hung parliament.

After several months of negotiation, the UDF and RPR have announced common electoral lists in over half of the new multi-member constituences in an attempt to squeeze out the NF. Opinion polls suggest an outright RPR-UDF victory. But this UDF-RPR electoral strategy may provide 'gift seats' to the NF in constituences where the electorate decides to reject the common list; or where the remaining separate UDF and RPR lists let the NF in; or where excluded and disappointed UDF-RPR candidates or right-wing rivals create effective divisions. Le Pen's target is to get between 50 and 100 seats out of the total of 597.

The NF's recent fortunes have been mixed. The CNIP has defected to the RPR, though some rebels will still vote NF. In Corsica, RPR-CNIP cooperation cost the NF votes and seats and may do so again in 1986.

The process of drawing up electoral lists has offended some NF militants. In order to maximize votes, Le pen is prepared to concede a number of leading positions on NF 'lists' to outsiders, for example ex-right-wing leaders and representatives of professional groups. This has alienated some aspiring NF candidates, producing complaints of lack of internal democracy. Some dissidents are threatening to run rival lists. Demarguet's attack on Le Pen is symptomatic of splits in the ranks.

Le Pen is at his best when under attack. In February he rode newspaper campaigns against his record as a torturer in the Algerian war. On radio and television his basic tactic consists of counter-attacks, diverting potentially damaging questions towards key NF vote-winning themes — immigation, restoration of the death penalty and law and order. On these topics, despite a welter of false statistics, Le Pen has been reaching a sympathetic audience far beyond the NF membership.

The result is that all the other political parties have modified their policies and attitudes. Since 1983, the mainstream right-wing parties have given immigration and law and order much greater emphasis. Since their election in 1981, the Socialists, too, have imposed tighter immigration controls, as some black British day visitors know only too well.

At Le Bourget last month, the mood was triumphant, as a mass rally greeted the NF leader with cries of 'Le Pen — President' and 'Le Pen to power'. Le Pen responded with a suitably vicious anti-immigrant and anti-media speech. Meanwhile, the NF organisation sold videos of Le Pen's television performance on *The Hour of Truth* interview (watched by a quarter of the French population) at £18 each and Le Pen wrist watches at £30 each.

The BBR festival served as a rallying point for the whole of the extreme Right. The NF today is clearly capable of attracting pretty heterogeneous support: young and old, working class and liberal professions, practising and nominal Catholics, small business men and women and company executives — all make up the NF electoral profile.

Significantly, the June 1984 NF vote included almost a quarter who had voted to elect President Mitterrand on the second ballot in 1981. The majority of NF voters are, of course, refugees from the right-wing parties (PRP, UDF, CNIP) and would not classify themselves primarily as extremists. The RPR and UDF may well still win them back. But the NF has not reached its maximum vote yet in rural areas, among young voters and working-class recruits from the Left. The current volatility of the electorate makes the elections next March look like a watershed in French politics. □

Paul Hainsworth is a Lecturer in Politics at the University of Ulster.

This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (On postcards please).

□Wildlife experts say that all bonfires should be turned over before being set alight on Guy Fawkes night to protect hedgehogs preparing their winter homes. Jeremy Iles, director of the London Wildlife Trust, said yesterday: 'Many people feed and protect hedgehogs through the summer. Then they accidentally cremate them in the bonfire.' — *Observer* (Catrina Garratt)

□Farmers reported good crops and excellent harvesting conditions for fruit and sugar beet, in which the sunshine had encouraged a high level of extractable sugar. 'One hesitates to say it, but people seem reasonably happy,' the National Farmers Union said. — *The Times* (Mrs A. Hilton)

□On-the-spot rewards of £10 are to be given to railway workers seen by 'undercover agents' going out of their way to help the public. — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

UNITED STATES

WHO IS HIDING WHAT — AND WHY?

Media coverage of the Yurchenko case in Washington has contained some strange omissions. CLAUDIA WRIGHT reports

Washington

THE CASE of Vitaly Yurchenko, the KGB agent who walked away from the CIA in Washington this week and returned to the Soviet Union, is a bigger bombshell for the Americans than they are admitting.

According to the CIA version, which the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the rest of the US press printed, Yurchenko was a senior KGB official who occupied 'one of the top five jobs in the Soviet intelligence agency', and 'oversaw KGB intelligence operations in the United States'.

The Soviet version is quite different. Yurchenko himself claims he was a 'security officer' at the Soviet Embassy in Washington between 1975 and 1980. Soviet officials say that he was not a senior KGB official and not in charge of US operations. They say he worked in security and counter-intelligence, protecting Soviet embassies from CIA penetration and held the relatively modest rank of colonel. The fact that he speaks poor English is an indication that Yurchenko was not a high-ranking figure in the US directorate. In September, the conservative Italian newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* partially confirmed this by reporting that Yurchenko had been in Rome to check security at the Soviet embassy there and to investigate an earlier breach of security in Madrid, after a Soviet nuclear scientist disappeared in April.

At his unprecedented press conference at the Soviet embassy in Washington on 4 November, Yurchenko identified two CIA officials, who reportedly told him that the drugs the CIA was using would drive him insane, if he did not co-operate.

Whatever theory you choose to believe about what lies behind Yurchenko's case, it exposes a level of disinformation and corruption by the CIA of the American press that no one in Washington wants to face.

The evidence for this lies in part in what reporters have already printed of the KGB man's purported disclosures, citing 'US government sources', 'intelligence sources' and 'Reagan Administration officials'. It also lies in detailed remarks by Yurchenko at his press conference — remarks that were deliberately cut from the verbatim excerpts published by the *New York Times* and ignored in reports by the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the major television networks.

Yurchenko made three damaging accusations. The first was that reporters collaborated with the CIA in seeking leaks from

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his interrogation for publication. Asked a question by a reporter from the *Washington Post*, who identified himseld as Patrick Tyler, Yurchenko recognised the name and said: 'I received your letters' — which Tyler then acknowledged sending.

Yurchenko followed up by asking the reporter about his CIA interrogator — 'my main torturer': 'It seems to me he hate all humanity because he is a psychologically sick person. He was veteran in Vietnam, wounded twice. . .you know him. His real name is Colin Thompson. . .One day he brought me letter from you where you are writing that you are neighbours and you would like to know circumstances how I am here. . .' According to Yurchenko, it was contacts like these from the US press, and copies of newspaper stories which he was shown by his interrogator, that were intended by the CIA to convince him that he had gone past the point of no return and had been identified as a defector, even if he was not.

Responding to a question from CBS correspondent, Robert Schakne, Yurchenko said: 'You're repeating word for word what I was told by Mr Gerber. . .Are you familiar with him? Do you work for him? Because he was telling me that they could give the press, the media any information they want'. Whether Yurchenko is lying about himself or not, the evidence suggests that US reporters have printed leaks from the CIA without any attempt to verify them independently and have allowed themselves to be used by Yurchenko's handlers and their superiors. It is perhaps not surprising that Tyler's report of the press conference in the *Washington Post* omitted what Yurchenko suggested about his personal involvement in the case. It is very surprising that the entire US press corps covered up as well.

The second extraordinary accusation that Yurchenko made was the the CIA men responsible for his alleged abduction and later interrogation may have deceived not only the US press, but also the CIA director himself about the KGB agent's value. 'It was my impression', Yurchenko said, 'that in order to fulfill that programme of getting information, of discrediting people, well, this is for them a method of getting information. It seems in order to do that, to a certain extent they are trying to deceive the government, including Mr Casey.'

He then went on to describe how he was coached and drugged before a luncheon meeting at CIA headquarters with Casey himself. 'When they were preparing me for that meeting they were concerned that I was going to say more than I was supposed to. . .' It is hard to explain why these dramatic statements were struck from the *New York Times* record and have gone unreported elsewhere.

Yurchenko's final allegation was perhaps the most serious of all — if it's true. It is that the Agency is engaged in a systematic programme of abducting, kidnapping, and drugging Soviet and East European officials and then forcing them to cooperate and cutting off their return home by making them appear in the press to be defectors. 'They told me I am not only alone. . .They say if you don't agree to cooperate with us, you will finish your life as one Polish defector who is now crazy — crazy. He now poses as Alexander the Second... he is happy because he is making orders as Emperor. . .therefore, you should maybe check what people defected from Polish country and what they are now. Maybe one of them who say the same, make publication — he is defector, he is traitor — and at the same time he is honest man who is victim. . .'

If Yurchenko is re-defecting, as the Americans claim, this is the self-serving charge he could be expected to make. If he has been a double agent all along, then this is a devilishly clever climax to the KGB's operation.

But what if it is true? Have the US media more to hide than a scoop at the CIA's expense is worth? □

SOUTH AFRICA

ENDS AND NASTY MEANS

Young blacks are turning to 'necessary' violence, reports PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

Johannesburg

SIMON IS 23, unemployed and a member of one of the youth congresses on the East Rand, east of Johannesburg. Unable to find work since he left school four years ago he has become a full-time activist. He gets his meals where he can and, being on the run from the security police, has no regular accommodation.

Though Simon's inferior 'Bantu' education has ensured that his English is broken and his grasp of mathematics almost non-existent, he has extensive knowledge of the theories of Marx and Lenin. Along with a growing number of youth activists in the country's black townships he sees the outcome of the struggle as more than just the overthrow of apartheid.

'The youth has come to realise that we are not only racially oppressed, but economically exploited', says Simon. 'They blame capitalism for the fact that they are unable to get jobs and ask: under capitalism, what have we gained?'

Interviews with Simon and other youth activists reveal a huge increase in militancy among the black youth since the township protest began in earnest more than a year ago. The effect of detentions, street battles and police and military action which have left hundreds dead has only been greater anger and alienation.

Since the declaration of a state of emergency on 21 July, the South African regime has clamped down hardest on the youth. Thousands of student leaders have been detained and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), probably the leading organisation in the township protest, has been banned by Law and Order Minister, Mr Louis Le Grange.

But contrary to views of some white commentators that the black youth are turning into an incipient Khmer Rouge, the politically more aware students are calling for disciplined action. They are opposed to the indiscriminate violence which has been a feature of the township protest.

Against all the odds student activists continued to organise mass protest in the trouble-torn townships, but their target switched to the national consumer boycott of white shops. Operating from the township of Tembisa on the East Rand, Vusi, a COSAS activist driven underground, says the students had appealed to the community to observe the boycott rather than stoning vehicles and burning houses.

To enforce the boycott, youths stopped people returning to the townships with shopping parcels, confiscating them, and, in some instances, forcing people to drink cooking oil. Though its success was uneven, the boycott had a devastating effect on commerce in some areas, and has forced conservative white businessmen to the bargaining table with young black radicals. In small towns historic pacts were struck between radical black organisations and the local traders. In Port Elizabeth a group of white traders publicly criticised the government for detaining activists and demanded their release so that they could negotiate an end to the boycott.

Though he supported the boycott, 21-year-old Vusi — like a growing number of angry people of his generation — is not opposed in principle to the use of violence for political ends. Another 16-year-old student, Malcolm, says: 'We have stoned vehicles — but what choice do we have? How does one voice one's anger?'

Vusi points to the fact that the military, who have occupied Tembisa for almost a year, have now given the squalid township a facelift, and claims it was their throwing of stones which brought this about.

Peter, a 19-year-old unemployed man from Soweto, who is opposed to what he calls 'unnecessary' violence, says that many youths believe it is justified to kill and burn 'collaborators' and informers. One particularly cruel form of killing, known as the necklace, is to put a burning tyre around the neck of a victim who then dies a slow and painful death.

'You may abhor and criticise that type of violence,' says Peter, 'but if you're detained, and you see what happens in detention — the results of informers' actions — then you might feel differently about retaliating against them.'

That the views of Vusi, Simon, Malcolm and Peter are representative of a large slice of young black opinion can be seen in the results of a recent opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Black Research (IBR). The poll found more than a quarter of urban blacks believed violent attacks on blacks working within the system was an acceptable strategy for political change, 36 per cent supported guerrilla attacks and two thirds regarded non-violent action such as boycotts and stayaways justified.

Interviews with student activists also confirm another finding of the IBR survey — that the demand of the vast majority is for nothing less than one person, one vote in a unitary system — 'the people must govern'. Vusi says that any proposed reforms of the State President, Mr P W Botha, do not impress black youth. 'They are too little, too late.' The IBR survey also found that more than three quarters of urban blacks of all ages support socialism. Among the militant black youth there appears *total* support for socialism — a profoundly significant fact for the future direction of South African society. □

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LETTERS

Voices that are never heard

C. Moray, London NW6

Badele Kensdale's criticism (Letters 1 November) of Benjamin Zephaniah's poem (*NS* 18 October) makes a number of broad and quite contentious comments about race relations in Britain and the links with South Africa. He argues that violence is justified in South Africa because there is 'a clear goal to the ending of discrimination', whereas violence in Brixton and Tottenham merely 'alienates the bulk of the population who are not racist'. It is my impression that the violence has in fact exposed the latent racism of many who had previously hidden behind a veneer of liberal concern about this major issue.

Mr Kensdale appears to try and convey the idea that apartheid in South Africa is a particularly visible and abhorrent form of racism, whereas racism in Britain does not, on the surface, contain such overt elements and therefore does not justify a similar response.

I don't think that we should hide from the fact that racism is endemic in our society, perpetuated by the remarks of leading politicians, the popular and not-so-popular press and our education system. Throughout Mr Kensdale's letter there is an anxiety about violence alienating people 'who don't resort to fire bombing to make their voices heard'. Perhaps he should concern himself more with the alienation felt by people whose voices are never heard.

Stand on Star Wars

Jane Mayes, Alston, Cumbria

Hamish Soutar is right (Letters 1 November) that cruise must remain a prime focus for CND and the peace movement. But I think he's mistaken to dismiss Star Wars as a concern only for the SDP-related Freeze movement and its supporters.

Star Wars is cruise and Pershing 2 all over again, only more so. The stakes are higher, the dangers greater, and the contradictions between US and European interests even more obvious. The imposition of cruise and Pershing 2 on unwilling governments and hostile populations succeeded, at a price, but it is highly unlikely that the imposition of Star Wars will do so, unless the real peace movement continues to dismiss it as a campaigning issue for the soft centre.

The peace movement, however, should not oppose Star Wars because it undermines deterrence, destroys the chances of negotiated reductions, upsets the theory of nuclear parity — we can leave all this to Geoffrey Howe and his friends. We oppose Star Wars because it is a qualitative escalation of the arms race, an obscene co-option of human intelligence and resources, and a confirmation of the intended function of cruise missiles, whether in Europe, the Pacific, the Atlantic or the Mediterranean, as political war-fighting weapons.

Star Wars and cruise are related, and not competing, targets for our campaigning. We failed, just, with cruise. With Star Wars, the field is still wide open.

Going for broke

Dr John Middleton, Coventry

According to Felix Pirani (*NS* 1 November), only 18,600 scientific and technical jobs will be created for $69 billion investment on the Strategic Defense Initiative. It is not clear how many jobs will be created building the weapons.

US Bureau of Labor figures are often quoted nowadays in the argument against arms spending. For $1 billion investment, 76,000 military jobs could be created, or 100,000 construction jobs, or 139,000 jobs in health services, or 187,000 jobs in education. Whatever the number of jobs created building Star Wars weaponry, it is going to be hard-pressed to beat the 7 million jobs which could be created in construction effectively to abolish unemployment in America. Do the American unemployed read your journal?

Pentagon Defense Guidance asserts: 'The USA and its allies should in peacetime declare economic and technological war on the Soviet Union. . .that the US should develop weapons for the Soviets to counter, impose disproportionate costs, open up new areas of major military competition and obsolesce previous Soviet investment.'

If, as Pirani believes, the USSR does not respond to Star Wars, but increases its strategic arsenal (at less expense), Star Wars could well backfire on US plans for economic war. It could be the USA which is bankrupted. In the meantime, we will all carry on paying for this global stupidity, in an economic war for which we have been volunteered.

Bloomsbury sneer

Joe Haines, Chief Leader Writer, Daily Mirror

I did not call Robert Maxwell a liar, a cheat and a crook and it is the weasel's way out to add 'or words to that effect' (*NS* 1 November).

I do not write 'his' leaders. I write 'my' leaders. My agreement with Mr Maxwell is that I never write anything with which I disagree.

I have not 'ghosted' his articles except in one instance when what I wrote would have been written exactly the same had it appeared under my name.

I am not the first working journalist (I prefer 'journalist' to your Bloomsbury sneer of 'hack') to serve on the Mirror board. Marge Proops and Tony Delano were there before me and I can count at least seven members of the NUJ who are fellow-directors.

You quote an unnamed 'colleague' as your source. I hope that he does not bring the same standard of accuracy to his journalism as he does to his gossip. But if it is who I think it is, then I fear that he does.

Question of presentation

Mike Garnier, Bristol

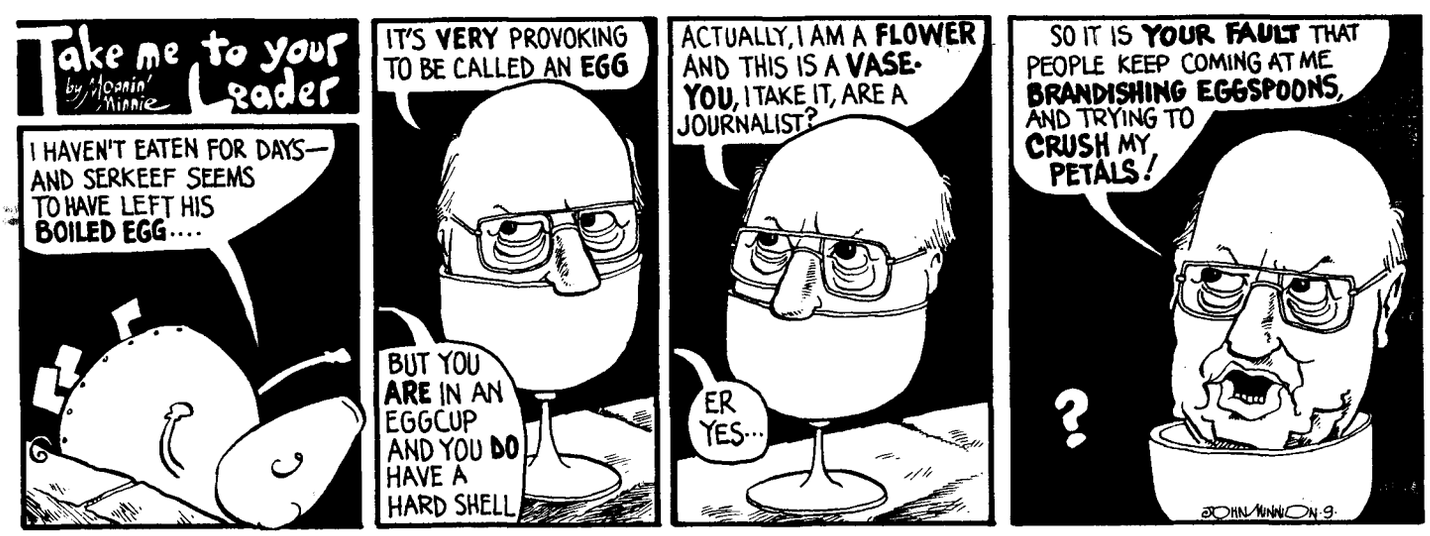
Following Julian Lewis's example (Letters 1 November), I too have conducted a survey into public attitudes towards nuclear weaponry. In response to the question: 'Should Britain continue to squander billions on the acquisition and maintenance of the means to incinerate millions of unknown men, women and children?', 99 per cent replied 'No' and 1 per cent said: 'There's nothing wrong with the policy. It's just a question of presentation.'

Oliver Owen, Hove, Sussex

The letter from Julian Lewis of Policy Research Associates (*NS* 1 November) raises the whole issue of the efficacy and reliability of questionnaires. This is probably ripe for scrutiny anyway.

Asking 'simply' may for instance be a formula for ambiguity and confusion rather than elucidation. What Mr Lewis asked Gallup to ask people 'simply', namely whether 'Britain should or should not continue to possess nuclear weapons as long as the Soviet Union has them' is, I suggest, simply only in a simple sense. In meaning — and therefore as affecting thoughtful answers — it could be said to be well within the tradition of loaded or question-begging questions. I personally should have refused to give a simple answer to it.

I wonder if Gallup might be commissioned to ask some other questions as well. Whether, for example, 'Britain should continue to possess


Take me to your leader
by Moanin' Minnie
I HAVEN'T EATEN FOR DAYS— AND SERKEEF SEEMS TO HAVE LEFT HIS BOILED EGG....
IT'S VERY PROVOKING TO BE CALLED AN EGG
BUT YOU ARE IN AN EGGCUP AND YOU DO HAVE A HARD SHELL
ACTUALLY, I AM A FLOWER AND THIS IS A VASE. YOU, I TAKE IT, ARE A JOURNALIST?
ER YES...
SO IT IS YOUR FAULT THAT PEOPLE KEEP COMING AT ME BRANDISHING EGGSPOONS, AND TRYING TO CRUSH MY PETALS!
?
JOHN MUNN ON 9.

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nuclear weapons until the Soviet Union gives them up first'. And whether 'Britain should initiate a reduction of nuclear weapons to encourage others to do the same'. Many other forms of words suggest themselves, do they not?

The comparative answers to these three questions could well destroy the delusion or pretence about simple questions.

City AA's tactics

Bill Barker, London N16

It is interesting that Terry O'Halloran's article (*NS* 18 October) on the 'Surround the Embassy' demonstration (called with the intention of increasing pressure for sanctions) became in fact an article about police tactics of crowd dispersal.

Perhaps this is exactly why the ANC and SWAPO are increasingly reluctant to share platforms with the City AA group and/or the Revolutionary Communist Group. The National AA, the ANC and SWAPO are involved with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and Namibia: the tactics currently adopted by City AA are directed towards the lack of accountability of the Met and their racist and sexist behaviour. These *are* important issues, though only indirectly related to the oppression and exploitation of black people in South Africa. The question for activists in the Anti-Apartheid movement is whether now is the time to take on the Metropolitan Police.

Pickets of the South African Embassy — in the centre of London's commuter and tourist land — are effective ways of involving the public, but they are not the only way. National AA and City AA both recognise this.

The conscious (pre-meditated) decision to be arrested — for that is what it is — and the defence campaign that necessarily develops, is one way of demonstrating the brutality of the Met and the partiality of the courts. However, unless direct links are made, and continually made, with the work of groups campaigning against apartheid, the defence campaign will remain simply a campaign to defend those arrested. Unfortunately one way in which the legal system *is* impartial is in its refusal to recognise the difference between the South African Embassy and the Nicaraguan Embassy. Outside either you are liable to be charged for obstruction (and not for the political reason underlying your presence).

The arrests at the end of the 2 November march illustrate that the media cannot be relied upon to put over the politics of the issue. The tactic, therefore has to be reviewed in the light of its effect.

FoE reply on 'dumping'

Stewart Boyle, Energy Campaigner, Friends of the Earth

The article by Duncan Campbell and Patrick Forbes on nuclear waste dumping (*NS* 18 October) gave a false impression of the views of Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. FoE did receive money from ENSEC 18 months ago to publish a report on nuclear waste dumping. It is FoE policy not to accept money for projects where strings are attached. The £2,500 (not £5,000 as stated in the article) was used to produce a report which is highly critical of *all* forms of dumping, not just sea dumping.

NUT's stomach for a fight

Fred Jarvis, General Secretary, NUT, London WC1

I am amused by Barry Hugill's second-hand journalism (*NS* 25 October). I cannot recall having spoken to him in the whole nine months of the present dispute yet he makes a number of comments about me and my alleged attitudes. However, he can produce no evidence to substantiate his allegation that I favoured a quick settlement and had no stomach for a fight and was not sure that my members had any stomach for a fight. And, as to his reference to Margaret Thatcher and Arthur Scargill, there were umpteen occasions from the outset of the dispute onwards when I refused to accept the suggestion of some journalists and others that because of the defeat of the miners the teachers were bound to be defeated as well.

I gather there are those who think I have been 'radicalised' late in life. It might be news to Mr Hugill that I organised my first left-wing political meetings at the age of 16 and was a Labour candidate 31 years ago. I recognise that in some peoples' eyes that kind of thing might not constitute radicalism but since the only evidence he cites is that I became furious with Sir Keith Joseph in July 1985 (when of course I was angry with him virtually from the outset of the dispute) it is obvious that he uses rather strange criteria.

Those points aside, I am glad that Barry Hugill has brought home to your readers the strength of feeling of our membership throughout the country and the massive support we have enjoyed throughout the dispute from the overwhelming majority of our members. We have had nine ballots to date and they have all revealed the same tremendous majority in favour of support for the Executive and for action by our members. From the events of last week I imagine that it will be our colleagues in the NAS/UWT who are going to have rather more trouble convincing their members of the need to collaborate with the enemies of their own action than we shall have in convincing our members of the need to take further action in order to secure a just settlement of the dispute.

"WHEN I FASTED LAST YEAR . . ."

Rob Hall

". . . I wanted to do something to help. I thought I might feel solidarity with hungry people in the Third World. In fact this only occurred when my fast ended.

"When I went back to a square meal I resolved to do anything possible to help relieve the hungry of their burden.

"Of course I shall be fasting this year. I only hope that millions of others do too."

Rob Hall is a Hungry for Change supporter in Bradford. He will be joining with thousands of others in a **24 hour fast** during the weekend of November 15, 16 and 17 in **Oxfam's second Hungry for Change FAST.**

The past 12 months have shown how much people in this country care about World Hunger. Everyone knows we need change — a change to give hope to the hungry and a change in the attitudes of governments towards them.

Last year's experience of fasting for one day allowed people to understand a little better the appalling fate of the 750 million people who suffer hunger **every day** without choice.

At the same time, through sponsorship, they raised valuable funds for Oxfam development projects overseas.

It is our intention that this year's fast should represent a massive expression of concern — of a nation hungry for change.

Time is running out.
Please join us. Fill in the coupon for details without delay.

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☐ I'm not able to fast,
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ALL THE FUN OF A PICNIC AS THE BOMB GOES OFF

The first British atom bomb was exploded in the Monte Bello Islands off Western Australia just ten months before JOAN SMITH *was born. Although she was reared in the cold-war atmosphere, the 'image of the mushroom cloud faded and lost much of its power' for her until late 1982, when as a* Sunday Times *journalist she became involved in investigating the illnesses contracted by men who had been present at the British tests. The* Sunday Times*'s own 'political climate altered' and she left determined to write a book on the tests and the propaganda that had surrounded them. As Australia's own Royal Commission to inquire into the 1950s tests prepares to report, we extract from Joan Smith's* Clouds of Deceit — The Deadly Legacy of Britain's Bomb Tests, *published on 11 November by Faber & Faber*

THE 'INHERENT STUPIDITY' of testing the first British atom bomb in Australia — the words are Margaret Gowing's, official historian of the early days of Britain's nuclear programme — lay in the huge effort required to prepare such a distant and inhospitable site for the explosion. The Monte Bello Islands could not even provide a supply of water for the number of people involved in the test in one way or another — 1,100 British and Australian personnel as the time for the test drew close. The Australian armed forces obligingly helped out with several vital tasks. In February 1952, for instance, the No. 5 Airfield Squadron of the Australian air force, the RAAF, constructed a freshwater pipeline on the mainland which brought water to a jetty near the mouth of the Fortescue river. Throughout the entire operation, all the water needed in the Monte Bellos was taken from this jetty by an Australian navy water lighter across the fifty miles to the islands.

The Royal Navy supplied five ships for the operation, which was given the code name Hurricane. It was carried out under the overall control of a senior naval officer. Ninety-nine scientists travelled by ship to the islands, the majority of them on HMS *Campania*, where relations between the civilians and the navy became decidedly strained. Other scientists, including William (now Lord) Penney, the scientist in charge of the test, were luckier: they flew to Australia in Hastings aircraft and then made the trip from Onslow, on the mainland, to the test site in the Monte Bellos in the Australian ships, HMAS *Hawkesbury* and *Warreen*.

Before they left England, the scientists in charge of the weapon test recognized that conditions on the Monte Bellos would be difficult, even dangerous. One thought that two or three serious accidents among their number would be unsurprising, given the hostile nature of the environment — choppy seas and unwelcoming terrain. But the services and the government took a more robust view. Air Vice-Marshal Davis, at the Ministry of Supply, thought the operation would be 'a grand experience combined with the fun of a picnic'; the government adhered to the opinion that taking part in an atom bomb test was a perfectly normal part of service life.

The insurance arrangements for the test reinforce this view. The Treasury agreed to honour insurance policies covering the lives of both service and civilian personnel if they were invalidated by their participation in the test. It also insured *civilians* at the test for five times their annual salary. This clause specifically excluded service personnel, however, as 'their normal duties are regarded as covering this employment'. Insurance cover taken out by the Treasury was valid for only seven years after the test. At the Australian Royal Commission's hearings in London in 1985, a British lawyer pointed out that this was of little use, since the latency period — the time which it takes to develop — for radiation-induced diseases like leukaemia and cataracts is much more than seven years in both cases.

The government claimed at the time of the Hurricane test that 'attributable rates of pension' would apply to servicemen injured in the test; this clause has turned out to be a hollow promise for the majority of ex-servicemen who have since tried to get pensions for illnesses they believe they have suffered as a result of the bomb tests. The Treasury decided that 'the widow of any officer would not be entitled to the "killed in action" gratuity.'

The British government did not release figures showing the yields of the bombs detonated in Australia until 1984. Only then did it become clear that the very first bomb was one of the largest in the entire series of tests. At 25 kilotons, the equivalent of 25,000 tons of TNT, it was bigger than either of the bombs used against Japan, and among the British bombs it was the second biggest. Penney commented on radio in November 1952 that the explosion 'had some resemblance to that of the atomic weapon exploded by the United States in the waters of the Bikini Lagoon'. In fact, the Hurricane explosion was designed to replicate a phenomenon first observed at this US test in 1946. It was called 'base surge'. The second Bikini test had shown that when a bomb exploded underwater, a huge quantity of water was thrown into the air, where it formed a column contaminated with the products of the explosion. When the column started to fall back to earth, it spread out rapidly and contaminated a wide area.

'A perfectly normal part of service life'

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EVERY YEAR 11 MILLION ACRES OF RAINFOREST ARE DESTROYED FOR THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE.

It's not just fashionable mahogany toilet seats that are to blame.

Doors, floors, window frames, veneers, plywood, office and household furniture – every product made of tropical hardwood contributes to this destruction.

Since 1945, nearly half of all rainforests have been wiped out. With them went countless unique and exotic wild creatures, and every day at least one more species becomes extinct.

Native peoples have been driven from their homelands, often into poverty and famine.

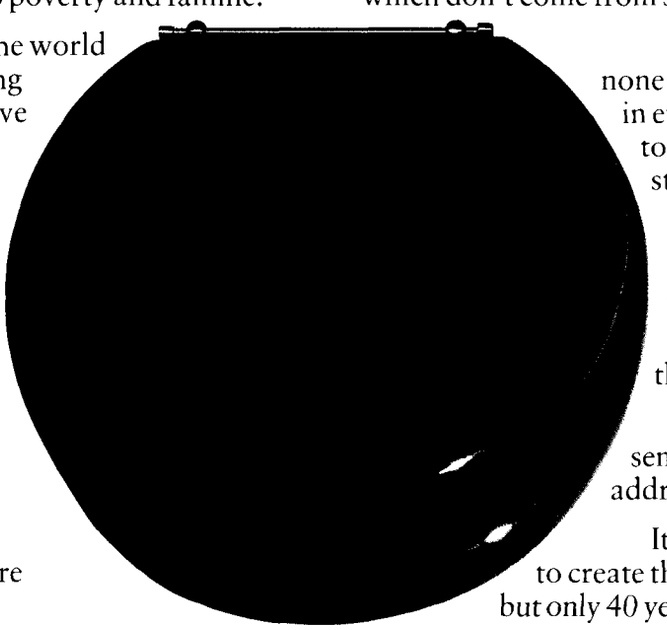
Weather patterns the world over are being upset, causing droughts, floods and massive soil erosion.

And often just for the sake of some fancy fittings in our homes.

The absurd thing is, it doesn't have to happen.

Everyone could enjoy the rainforests and their produce for centuries to come.

If only we were more responsible now.



Friends of the Earth intend to press the international timber trade into establishing sustainable forests. (These are forests where new trees are planted after others are felled and logging damage is strictly controlled).

But this will only be achieved when people all over the world push for such changes.

In producer countries like Malaysia and Brazil, Friends of the Earth groups are campaigning to change government policies towards the rainforests.

Meanwhile, in Britain we can greatly help by refusing to buy tropical hardwood products, which don't come from sustainable sources.

At the moment, almost none do, and they're available in every high street in every town, from department stores to corner DIY's.

Let the sales people know of your distaste for these products.

Ask them about the many alternatives.

Or help by sending a donation to the address below.

It took 100 million years to create the tropical rainforests but only 40 years to destroy half of them.

If we don't act now, there will be none left in another 40 years.

Campaign to Save Tropical Rainforests

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

377 City Road, London EC1V 1NA. 01-837 0731

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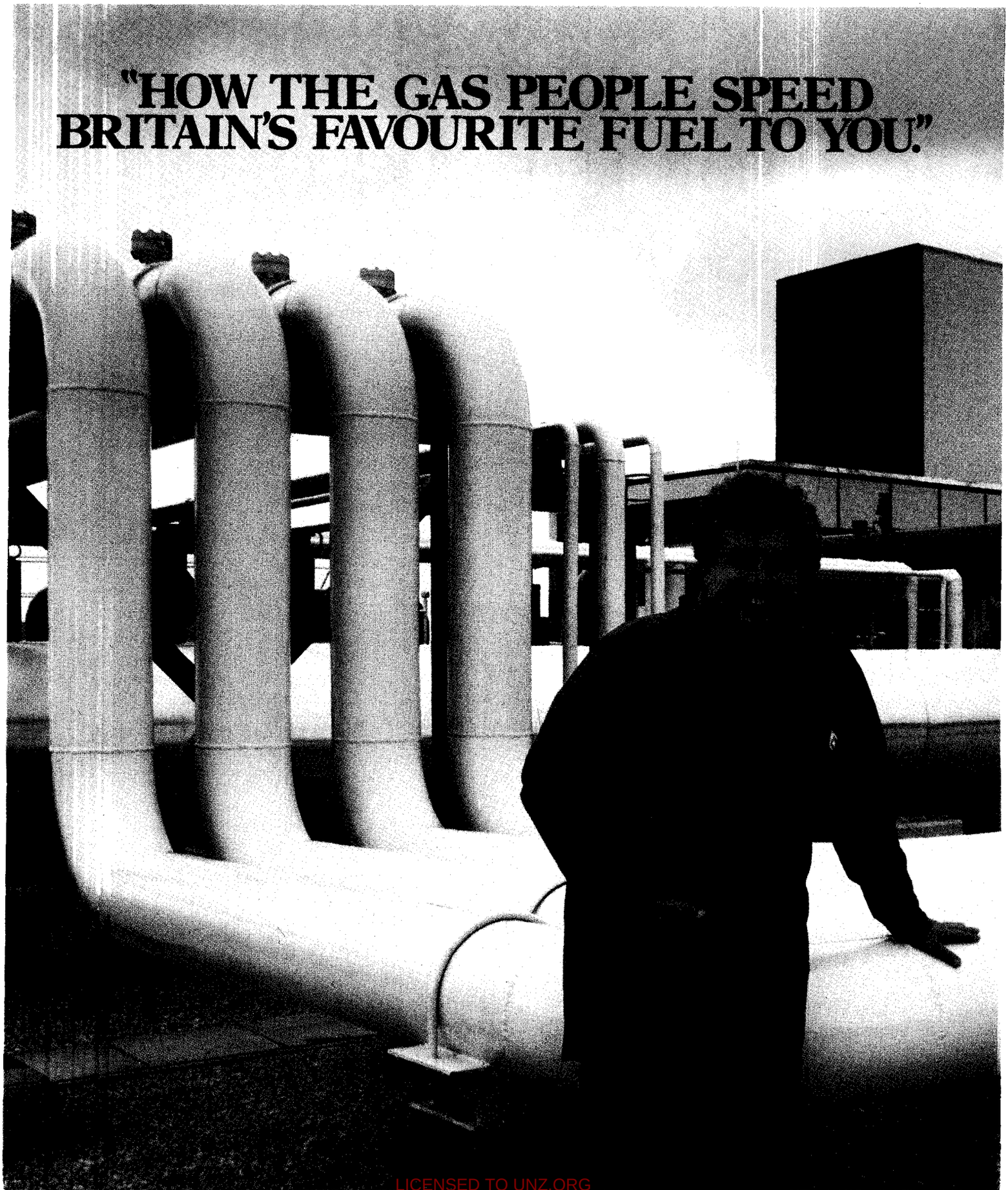
People prefer gas – it provides nearly sixty per cent of all the heat used in British homes, and it's also the most widely used heat source in industry. But getting the gas from beneath the sea-bed to our homes and factories involves some highly sophisticated solutions to complex technical problems.

For instance, the pressure of the gas needs to be boosted at regular intervals during its long journey through the underground pipeline system – and the gas people's solution is typically ingenious. They use aircraft jet engines to drive the compressors – and run them, naturally, on gas.



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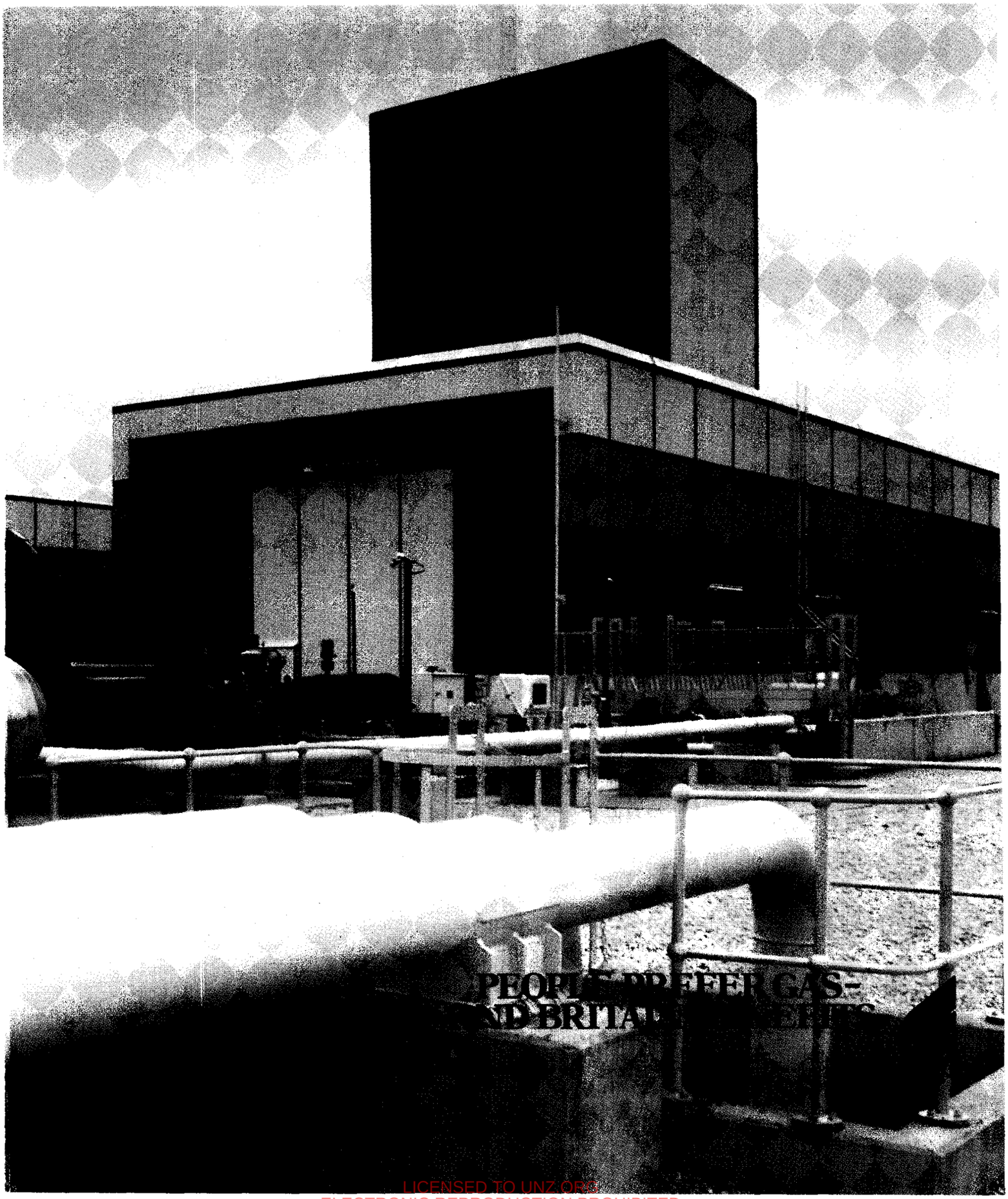
Colin Welland is standing in front of one of these compressor stations, as they're called. Housed within the buildings are two Rolls-Royce Avon engines developing 18,000 horsepower each, and controlled by 'state-of-the-art' computer equipment. Advanced acoustic engineering renders the installation virtually silent.

This is just a small part of the massive investment British Gas has made, and continues to make,in the future of gas. Billions of pounds are being spent with British firms – creating literally thousands of jobs for British workers. Just one more way in which Britain benefits because people prefer gas.



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JOBS AND INDUSTRY

WOMEN AND WORK

LABOUR'S JOBS AND INDUSTRY Campaign

The talents of most women are wasted, and the contribution that they make often ignored. Yet the economy would collapse without the vital part women play in the labour market.

Women's opportunities are limited not because women are less able than men, but because family responsibilities do not allow them to compete on the same terms.

A Labour government will aim to give every woman the opportunity to work.

By changing the nature of work to help achieve equality at home as well as at work. And by ensuring that women and men can, if they wish, share paid work and family care.

That is why we are proposing far-reaching changes in:

- education and training;
- childcare provision;
- care of the elderly and disabled;
- shorter and more flexible hours;
- better parental leave.

We aim to improve the quality of women's work by:

- giving equal rights to part time workers;
- protecting homeworkers;
- improving health and safety at work;
- outlawing sexual harassment;
- using new technology;
- giving women equality within trade unions.

And we propose taking action to improve women's pay, pension and tax rights.

These measures add up to major improvements for women and work.

To implement them, we require the return of a Labour government committed to a better deal for women and work.

Jo Richardson
Labour's Spokeswoman on Women's Affairs

I would like to know more about the Jobs and Industry Campaign

Name .....

Address .....

Postcode ..... Tel. No. .....

Return this form to Jobs and Industry Campaign Team, The Labour Party Room 106, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT

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Clifford Harper

'A fawning and uncritical press'

In the Hurricane test the cloud rose to just over two miles above the sea, the great weight of mud and water preventing its rising further. With hindsight, Australia was extraordinarily generous in its attitude to the conduct of the first three British tests. Operation Hurricane was carried out under British control, with virtually no say being given to the Australians. This arrangement continued for the Operation Totem tests a year later, in 1953. It was a situation which, in the end, disturbed even the hitherto complacent Australians — in 1955, they belatedly set up their own committee which was to be responsible for the health of the Australian people.

AUSTRALIA'S nuclear watchdog, the Australian Ionising Radiation Advisory Council, known as AIRAC, took an optimistic view of the set-up for the early explosions when it reported in 1983 on the British tests and concluded: 'Although Australian services and scientific personnel were present at all three tests, and meteorological services and consultants were provided for the tests, the decision when to fire rested solely with the British authority. However, it may reasonably be presumed that the authority would have taken into account the views of Australian meteorological officers in determining firing times.'

But nine days before the test took place at Monte Bello, the *Daily Graphic*'s Sydney correspondent reported that the prime minster of Australia, Robert Menzies, had confirmed that he did not even know the date on which the test was due to take place. 'I cannot assist the tests — except by keeping quiet,' he said cryptically. No wonder that the *Daily Graphic* went on to report that 'highest government quarters in Canberra' were criticizing Britain for 'excessive secrecy'. An unnamed member of the Australian cabinet is reported to have told the *Daily Graphic* that 'Britain is treating us like colonials' by withholding almost all information. 'Several ministers are openly piqued that Australia should be asked "to do the spade and shovel work at Monte Bello and then be asked to quit the site," ' the report concludes.

These murmurings from unnamed sources did not improve Australia's position. In August 1954, nearly two years after Operation Hurricane, Professor Leslie Martin, Professor of Physics at Melbourne University, met officials from the British Ministry of Defence to complain that Australia had not yet been given any information about the Monte Bello test or, for that matter, the two tests which had been carried out in 1953 at Emu Field. The British officials at the meeting were very sympathetic. The difficulty was a technical one, they said reassuringly. Unfortunately, the relevant reports were just being sent to the printer, and happened to be unavailable for the moment. They would be provided soon.

As it happened, the British themselves had less information about Operation Hurricane than they were to have about any other test in the Australian series. The bomb was the very first tested by the British on their own; it was one of the biggest bombs tested in or close to Australia; it was an underwater burst which was known, from the American experience at Bikini in 1946, to produce heavy contamination. In spite of all these factors, only the most desultory attempt was made to check for contamination on the mainland.

In fact, the conduct of the first British test was far from something to be proud of, in spite of the fawning and uncritical press it got at the time. Air crew were not given protective clothing, nor were they monitored to check their exposure to radiation while engaged on the dangerous job of taking samples of the radioactive cloud; estimates of their exposure are really little more than guesses. Radioactive waste was simply dumped in the sea. The permitted levels of exposure to radiation for personnel at the test were much too lax,

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while no one even gave thought to limits for the exposure of the Australian public. The four main British ships taking part in the exercise became contaminated and were still radioactive when they arrived back in Britain months later; the naval dockyards had no experience at all in how to decontaminate them. The Monte Bello Islands were not properly guarded after the test to prevent chance visitors being exposed to radiation.

Safety measures at the test consisted largely of keeping unauthorized people out of the area and laying down permitted levels of exposure for the people actually involved in the test. No recommendation at all was made about the maximum amount of radiation *members of the public* should be exposed to. The standards adopted permitted personnel involved in the test to be exposed to *six times* the maximum dose laid down for workers in the nuclear industry at home.

A full rehearsal of the test took place on 19 and 20 September; on 1 October, the standby period started. The weapon was detonated by remote control at 9.30 in the morning, Australian time, on 3 October. HMS *Plym*, within whose bowels the weapon had been placed, was vaporized in the blast. Penney watched the test from the flight deck of HMS *Campania*, along with Torlesse and most of the ship's company. They faced away from the explosion as they listened to the last seconds of the countdown being relayed over the ship's loudspeakers.

IN HIS RADIO broadcast a few weeks after the test, Penney recalled: 'Suddenly there was an intense flash, visible all around the horizon. We turned to look. The sight before our eyes was terrifying — a great, greyish black cloud being hurled thousands of feet into the air with astonishing rapidity. A great sandstorm suddenly sprang up over the islands. It seemed ages before we heard the bang but, in fact, it was only a minute. Somewhat to our surprise, a second bang — at least as loud as the first — followed a few seconds later. At the same time we felt a peculiar sensation in our ears such as one has in an aircraft losing height rapidly. We were feeling the suction, or reduced pressure, which always follows a blast wave. All the time the cloud was getting higher and higher and assuming fantastic shapes as it was pulled about by the strong winds at different altitudes.'

The shape of the cloud was a warning of just how unpredictably atomic clouds can behave. Clouds would get lost or they would be blown in unexpected directions, either because the wind changed or because winds were blowing in different directions at various levels. The cloud from Hurricane encountered exactly this phenomenon.

Penney went on to say that 'the experiment went according to plan'. But the key secret report on Hurricane, compiled by Rear-Admiral Torlesse and released only in 1985, during the Australian Royal Commission hearings, tells a more complicated story. As planned, the early fallout fell into the sea to the north of the islands, and on the northernmost section of the islands themselves. But Torlesse's report shows that the cloud then behaved so erratically that, by the next morning, most of it was lost; it also shows that part of the cloud broke away and drifted over the mainland not at the expected height of 25,000 feet, but at 10,000, while another piece of it was detected on its way to Fiji.

A section of the cloud had been expected to travel south-east across the centre of Australia at between 25,000 and 30,000 feet. But on the day of the explosion, weak contamination was detected by an RAAF Lincoln at 10,000 feet near Port Hedland, on the mainland, to the east of the Monte Bellos. Although Torlesse's report is detailed, there is at least one interesting omission from it. He records a number of occasions on which ships sailed into areas where the water was contaminated — HMS *Tracker* detected fallout one mile south of Flag island, directly south of Trimouille, on the day of the explosion, for example. But the fact that the ships were still radioactive on their arrival back in Britain is not mentioned.

'The cloud assumed fantastic shapes'

The Torlesse report is dated 20 March 1953. Thirteen days before, *The Times* reported an Admiralty announcement that *Campania, Narvik, Tracker* and *Zeebrugge* 'still carry some evidence of their association' with the atomic explosion at the Monte Bello Islands. In fact, a special warning had had to be issued to men working in the engine rooms of the ships after intakes were found to have taken in contaminated sea water, the Royal Commission was told by Major-General Alec Walkling in January 1985.

The Times went on to report the cheerful news that 'it was pointed out at the Admiralty yesterday that the effect of the contamination has not prevented the ships remaining in commission since the Monte Bello test, and that all have continued to have complements living on board.' Torlesse's report does not deal with the implications for the health of the people who lived on the four contaminated ships during the long journey home, or of those servicemen who were still stationed on board at the time of the announcement.

There was a problem of radioactive waste on board *Zeebrugge*. Effluent from the laboratories, consisting of fresh water which had been used to wash down contaminated items, had to be disposed of. The drums were thrown over the stern of *Zeebrugge*. To the dismay of those on board, the partly-filled drums floated. The solution adopted was simple. The drums were riddled with rifle fire until they began to fill with sea-water and sink.

Torlesse reports: 'The bullet holes permitted the effluent to seep away slowly, after which it would be diluted by the sea, thus ensuring that potentially dangerous concentrations did not remain in the drums for a long period.' Presumably, the same result of contaminating the sea with readioactive waste could have been achieved by simply pouring it overboard in the first place. Perhaps Torlesse had other things on his mind at the time — the return of empty beer bottles, for instance?

'Canned beer costs one shilling for a 12 oz can and is not as popular as bottled beer,' the Rear-Admiral reports. 'Further, about two per cent of the cans were found to contain flat beer. Australian beer, costing one shilling and threepence (Australian) for a 26 oz bottle, is cheaper and better. The decision to use British beer was taken because of:

(a) the convenience of canned beer and
(b) doubt about the availability of sufficient quantities of Australian beer.

It is recommended that in any future operation in this area Australian beer should be used. The return of empties is a disadvantage but presents no insoluble problem.'

When a team from Greenpeace, the environmental pressure group, visited the Monte Bellos more than 30 years after the first test, they found that 'the overwhelming beauty of the islands ... lulled us into a false sense of security about the dangers of visiting a radioactively contaminated area'. At Alpha Island 'one would have had to walk on contaminated ground' to read the warning signs. As a general rule, 'the radiation hazard signs around the ground zero [the point on the earth nearest the centre of the explosion] sites were too small in size, difficult to read from a distance and too few in number.'

Greenpeace claims it will take 60 years for radiation levels at the ground zeros on the islands to decline to limits recommended as safe for the public. They want contaminated areas to be fenced off and marked with prominent signs warning of the dangers. Since this safeguard was considered 'virtually impossible' in 1956, when the danger was at its height, the chances of its happening now seem slight. □

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Grabbing them young

Michael Rosen

The mighty pen is mightier still when its victims are aged between three and eight. . .

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN under the age of about eight are nearly all by, from, and for adults. Adult editors choose the adult writers and adults buy the books. The thing about under eights is that you *can* brainwash them. You jam them into their bunks just as the fizz is fading and you zonk them with your prejudices...er...I mean carefully selected literature. Here are my prejudices, aided and abetted by Joe (9), Naomi (7), Eddie (5) and Laura (1.99).

A Lion in the Night by Pamela Allen (Hamish Hamilton £5.95) is a book for three-year-olds plus. 'There once was a baby who lived in a castle...' The castle is the cot but it is also a castle where she lives with a gang of royal and military personages (imaginary) and a toy lion (real). But the lion becomes imaginary and takes the baby for a run. There's a chase, a scare, a feast and a poetic resolution. The book is about imagination. It's slightly risky, slightly mad and very successful.

Jan Ormerod, who has furtively seized the minds of many parents and children with (e.g.) her *101 Things to do with a Baby*, had produced a very funny, slow tease with **The Story Of Chicken Licken** (Walker Books £5.95). Don't shout 'Got it already!' This is a story *about* the story. A group of children act out the story we know to a group of adults plus toddler plus pre-toddler, presented mostly in silhouette. Thus we have three narratives running: the story as we know it, the story as acted and the stories of the watchers. The medium of The Book is explored perfectly; each spread has to be examined and enjoyed. Three-year-olds plus.

Knock Knock Who's There by Sally Grindley and Antony Browne (Hamish Hamilton £5.50) is not a collection of 'Cows. Cows who? No they don't, cows moo!' etc. It's a brilliant little book of a girl in bed while somebody knocks on her door. A sequence of imagined beings call out and appear, all mysteriously wearing the same bedroom slippers, until in the end we discover they were all the same person; were they? This is another book that explores the medium perfectly and hits the imagination-reality axis just right. Three-year-olds plus.

Moving up the age range a bit, Hugh Lewin and Lisa Kopper have produced **An Elephant Came to Swim** (Hamish Hamilton £5.95), a well drawn, faintly amusing story of an elephant who barges into the grounds of a Zimbabwe hotel. It's a fairly bald celebration of the Zimbabwean petit bourgeoisie. The elephant saves the flagging business with his antics. Perhaps the elephant is the IMF. Five-year-olds plus.

Of similarly adult preoccupation but much more successful is James Herriot's **Only One Woof** (Michael Joseph £4.95). It's the story of a dog that didn't bark, set in pre-war sheep-farming territory. It's a soft-centred story served up with lashings of nostalgia for adults in Peter Barrett's pictures. It's a cunning marketing ploy: 'Oh look that vet chap has done a lovely picture book. I remember when they used to stook corn like that.' Yet another best vet-seller? Four-year-olds plus.

Christine Roche

Adrian Mitchell, who told us of the lies about Vietnam, is now telling us lies about Baron Munchausen. People who have struggled to find the tickle with previous translations of Mr Munch need struggle no more. Mr Mitch has, to imitate his style, written a book that is as funny as fiddlesticks and as good as gumboots. The lies are as silly as sausages and the language is as mad as mashed potato. **The Baron Rides Out** (Walker Books £4.95) is the first of several. 'Start collecting,' commands Joe. (I met the Baron last week and he told me that he thinks A. Mitchell is a scalliwag and will have his guts for garters.) Five-year-olds plus.

A newcomer to children's books is Labour Research, the people you ring to find out how much lucre MacAlpine dropped the Tories last year. They've produced a book called **Union Farm** (£1.95). It's bad working conditions for the animals down on Moneybags's farm, so, with a bit of banner-making and picketing, they win better conditions and form themselves a union branch. Joe liked this one but thought they ought to get the farmer into the union. Perhaps Joe is Mussolini and I never noticed. My own feeling about this one is that the book implies, though it is denied, that the struggle's over once you've got a union and this is what Joe picked up on. It's not clear to me why the

COMRADES

Alan Bookbinder, Olivia Lichtenstein and Richard Denton

In this compelling new book, the authors seize a unique opportunity to explore the social and economic issues concerning the Soviet Union today, through the views and impressions of its inhabitants. The book and the related TV series are based on interviews recorded as the authors travelled through the Soviet Union, meeting and talking freely to ordinary people of widely differing backgrounds, cultures and professions, such as a film director in Leningrad, a fashion designer in the Baltic, a government official in the far east and a collective farmer in the Cossack south.

Fascinating opinions and new points emerge as each individual describes his or her homelife, job, views on the Party and the West, peace and war and personal ambition. These portraits throw new light on the lifestyles and occupations of a great nation which remains largely unknown and misunderstood in the West. We see the Soviet people as lively, warm and friendly, proud of their heritage and keen to improve their standard of living and widen their opportunities in a Soviet Union which is busy tackling the problems faced by all developed countries in the 1980's.

Available from booksellers £11.95

To be published on November 7th

BBC PUBLICATIONS

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animals don't take over the farm. Seven-year-olds plus.

Dent have plucked an old Dylan Thomas story, **The Outing** (£5.95), from out of the treasure hoard. I remember my dad reading Dylan Thomas stories out loud when I was a kid and I enjoyed them, but couldn't quite understand why everyone else was pissing themselves laughing. I think the problem of the Thomas lingo for kids is that the gags are embedded in the metaphors: 'the forest fire of his hair' and all that. And the dialogue is subtly unresolved with running gags and fall guys providing the laughs just out of reach of a child's awareness. The story may be about a little boy's view of adults but the whole thing is enveloped in adult jests. I love it but Joe gave up. Twelve-year-olds plus ... but I'm not sure the drawings match the age.

And so to a problem: **Rose Blanche** by Roberto Innocenti, Christophe Gallaz and Ian McEwan (Cape £5.95). Immaculate, film-still-like colour pictures tell the story of a girl in a small town (German) during the war who discovers people are being transported through the town to a camp. She discovers the camp and takes food to the children there. Other soldiers arrive (Russians), her mother flees, never to see the girl again because she is apparently shot. The book is a total mistake. Every page is like a quotation with vast amounts of detail of huge resonance to adults and much mystery to a child. The text, in opposition, is bald, sentimental and deliberately non-explicit, as if to say, 'This is all you need to know.' The pictures meanwhile draw you into the highly specific: insignia, clothing and the like. The meaning of the plot is full of idealism (pejorative sense) and the whole thing is a mish-mash of caricature, myth, fantasy and documentary. Liberate me from such liberators. 'Hey author, leave that kid alone.'

Naomi and Joe have hi-jacked my copies of Terry Jones's **Nicobobinus** (Pavilion/Michael Joseph £7.95) and they're refusing to let me get at them. They tell me it's the story of a little bloke who gets in and out of amazing scrapes. It seems to be a kind of rumbustious Pinocchio-like tale, full of alarum, excursion and exeunts with flourish. Somebody once said that fantasy and myth are successful when they have 'psychic reality': i.e. the emotional flow is 'real' while all around is fantastic. I think Joe and Naomi think Terry Jones is pretty hot on psychic reality though they didn't quite put it that way. More adult preoccupations, ho hum ho. Seven-year-olds plus. □

Yukky dip

Naseem Khan

Nastiness comes as a welcome relief from the sentimental goo in which too many books for the over-eights have been dunked

YOU MIGHT WONDER occasionally, wading your way through new children's books, who some of the authors are really writing for. What real-life child, for instance,

would be a tiny bit interested in how Jeremy James found his daddy's car keys. (Naughty daddy, always losing things.) Or how the self-same tot runs out of the barber because he's convinced from the evidence before his eyes that he's going to be given either coloured spikes or a bald head? The blurb for David Henry Wilson's **Do Goldfish Play the Violin?** (Dent £6.95) tells us that Jeremy James has been bringing laughter to children and parents ever since an elephant sat on Daddy's car. Well, there's no accounting for taste, but as far as I and my children (Amelia Tasneem, 10; George Haroun, eight) are concerned, we would have been rather happier if the elephant had sat on Jeremy James.

Colvin, of Sam McBratney's **Colvin and the Snake Basket** (Methuen £4.50), is another candidate for the elephant. Colvin is also a cutie. Of indeterminate age (but the big print suggests six or seven), his favourite reading is a mail-order catalogue and his favourite haunt an Ali Baba laundry basket. Like Jeremy James, he is for ever getting into scrapes: his big sister's doll gets vandalised, the class gerbil comes to a sad end (and is swiftly replaced by an identical gerbil), his pet monkey gets chomped by a dog. At least there are hints of real life in Colvin's relationship with his big bossy sister and a suggestion of a multiracial school.

Both chaps (why no girls?) are descendants of Richmal Crompton's immortal William: scruffs and troublemakers. But William's troubles came about because of his own wonderfully anarchic imagination and used the foibles of the adult world as kindling for the bonfires he invariably created. He wasn't sentimentalised and he was certainly not — as are Colvin and Jeremy James — quaint.

Richard Adams also tumbles into cuteness, but at least in the case of **The Bureaucats** (Viking Kestrel £5.95) they're not human cuties. Thomas and Richard Kitten keep house for Master, as well as they can in between getting into all sorts of hot water; they masquerade as Christmas tree decorations in order to get into the children's ward party and are unmasked; they send a prize-winning poem in for a newspaper competition, embarrassing Master, in whose name they'd sent it; their April Fool joke with a fake box of chocs goes awry; and so on. Robin Jacques's drawings are suitably charming and my children thought it all sweet.

Nevertheless, for our money, we'd much rather get to know Dr Boox and all the odd animals that this lazy, slobby vet (he sleeps covered by loads of dogs and hamsters) encounters: sinking ducks, sore-throated giraffes, a boxing kangaroo running riot in a supermarket and a greyhound addicted to late-night TV. **The Fantastic Feats of Doctor Boox** (Methuen £4.50) by Andrew Davies, the creator of Marmalade Atkins, is a kind of antithetical Dr Dolittle. It has a zappy, nice energy to it and that horrid delight in badness that good children like.

W.J. Corbett's short stories in **The End of the Tale** (Methuen £6.50) have a similar cheerful nastiness to them. The creatures in them show the redder side of nature's tooth and claw. Jason the hare spends all his time dashing through the wolf-infested wood carrying notes from his neurotic mother to his Grandma, hoping he won't get hugged to death by a wolf; he does. Two monkeys invent a new pastime they call 'war'. A rotten weasel develops Hitlerian tendencies. The stories are written with a mordant wit and savagely illustrated by Tony Ross.

Jason Bodger of Gene Kemp's **Jason Bodger and the Priory Ghost** (Faber 6.95) is an antihero. Bodger's days as the terror of class 4Z end with a school trip to a local priory when he, and he alone, sees the ghost of a young nun. The book leaps back and forth over eight centuries to weave in the story of young Matilda de Chetwynde, the stalwart loser in a mediaeval power battle that left her walled up in that self-same priory. A good strong mystery story, peopled by recognisable children.

Ghosts, magic and mystery make a strong showing. Catherine Storr's new stories in **Cold Marble** (Faber £5.95) are a chilly lot: uneasy, full of loss and sadness, rather than downright spinechillers. Pamela Oldfield's **The Christmas Ghost** (Blackie £5.95) is also in a rather minor key, without Storr's metaphysics. Lynne Reid Banks's **The Fairy Rebel** (Dent £6.95) is a rather soppy story about a tiny fashion-mad fairy who engineers it so that childless Jan gets pregnant. For this she and her fairy boyfriend incur the wrath of the tyrannical Fairy Queen. They are saved not by bravery or ingenuity but by the magic hair on Jan's child's head, which is a bit disappointing.

The conclusion of Gyles Brandreth's **Ghost at No. 13** (Viking Kestrel £3.95) is also a bit iffy — a shame since this is a funny and vigorous little book about a boy who's constantly overshadowed by his achieving older sister. However, when a ghost comes to spend its holidays in his cupboard, it gives him the spur to turn out a school project that is bigger and better than anything the dazzling Susan ever managed.

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Cyril Bonhamy also wins through no virtue of his own. The plump, short-sighted author in Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy's **Cyril Bonhamy and Operation Ping** (Cape £5.95) finds himself involved in a daring SAS raid on an oriental island and apparently vindicates his baseless reputation for lunatic bravery. It's nicely packed with idiotic military types and equally caricatured fighting monks, and Quentin Blake's drawings have an apt battiness.

Like Bonhamy, young George in **Journey to the Volcano** (Hamish Hamilton £5.95) is spirited off to foreign parts, but there the resemblance ends. George is the offspring of an English father and a mother pining, in England's sterile clime, for the emotional warmth of her native Sicily. One day she takes off, snatching George from the school gates, returning to the village on the slopes of Etna. Rose Tremain's first children's book deals with the question of human relationship, contrasting the caring and generosity George encounters in his Italian family with the polite neglect of his father's family. In the end, everyone learns tolerance and the future for the reunited family, in this rather over-complicated but thoughtful book, looks bright.

The Cuckoo Sister by Vivien Alcock (Methuen £6.95) and Nina Bawden's **The Finding** (Gollancz £6.95) explore similar themes of identity. In the first book, Kate's long-lost sister, lifted in infancy, apparently returns: a sharp, streetwise girl far from Kate's confined Hampstead life. Is it really Emma? Will she supplant Kate and how will Kate cope with her own jealousy? It's a gripping book unfortunately marred by a weird portrayal of working-class life — all tartiness and aggro. Nina Bawden manages better. Her book deals with Alex, a foundling, who comes (through a convincing stroke of human stupidity) into big money. This destabilises his whole adopted family, throwing up confusing notions of value and security. Eventually Alex re-finds himself, but not without a credible and not unmoving struggle.

Ned Wallis, main character of Paula Fox's first-rate **One Eyed Cat** (Dent £6.95) has a similarly hard time. A minister's son in rural New York, he's tempted by the forbidden gift of a gun, sneaks out at night to fire it just the once and unwittingly semi-blinds a wild cat. This subtle book watches how Ned copes with his overwhelming sense of guilt over a long hard winter as the cat slowly recovers. 'In time,' says his mother, aware only that something nameless is troubling her son, 'you'll get happier. Life often gets better all by itself.' Simple as it sounds, it's a lesson worth learning, for adults and children alike. □

Waking up to the kid next door

Gillian Wilce

'Young adult' fiction is often derided. (When I *was a teenager, people sneer, I was reading* The Brothers Karamazov.*) But it's big business in the USA and, in Britain, more and more publishers, teachers and adolescents themselves are enthusiastic for novels specifically addressed to the teenage market. At their most banal, they can act as a kind of problem-page exploration: into drugs, sexuality, loneliness, the bizarre behaviour of parents. At their best, they are as complex and powerful as anything written for adults — distinguished only by having rather younger central characters and a frame of reference appropriate to younger people's experience*

Christine Roche

HILLSDEN RIOTS by Rhodri Jones (Deutsch Adlib £3.50) couldn't be more timely: a vigorous depiction of how it feels to be pushed around and treated with contempt by policemen just because you are young and black and on the street — and of how that feeling can grow till it bursts into violence. Wayne gets his first taste of being manhandled for no good reason on his way home from school one hot Friday and is later caught up in escalating street fighting with fire-bombing from one side and water-hoses turned on the crowd from the other. Brother Colin reluctantly leaves his careful A-level schedule to look for the errant Wayne. Wayne, meantime, is freedom fighter one minute, scared of what his mum will say the next.

Readers who do not know it at first hand will be made party to the experience of being black in a racist society while being left free to draw their own moral and political conclusions. The rapprochement of Colin and Wayne and their change-over in attitudes during the long turbulent weekend make a space for the reader's own thoughts.

Like *Hillsden Riots*, Janni Howker's **The Nature of the Beast** (Julia MacRae £6.95) offers, seemingly, the authentic voice of a region, a people, and a sharing of the worst experiences our society nurtures — in this case redundancy, long-term unemployment, poverty, people turning against each other out of frustration and bitterness. Not billed as being particularly intended for teenagers, it nevertheless fits neatly into this necessarily arbitrary sampling since it has a protagonist still at school coming to terms — or not — with adult life. As an increasingly drear world presses in on Bill Coward, his responses become focused on the Beast that may or may not stalk the moors above his town. An assured first novel.

All that Bill's universe and Tom's have in common is their Pennine setting. **Enter Tom** by June Oldham (Viking/Kestrel £3.95) is a light-hearted, sometimes funny account of Tom's learning to live with the women in his life and with his new sexual — and romantic — energies. The material isn't under perfect control; some misunderstandings are signalled too clearly too early. But the reader is admitted into Tom's head with some skill and not too much of the Holden Caulfields via his spoken-to-himself diary and his monologues to Sarah, the baby for whom he sits. He considers himself embattled against his feminist mother and his disillusion when an object of desire shows not a flicker of interest in questions about sex roles surprises him as much as it does us. He finally discovers where his affections mostly tend in something of a boy-wakes-up-to-girl-next-door ending. And the book's subtlety lies in the relationship — not wholly conscious — between the two findings out.

Tom's English teacher's desire that he occasionally produce an essay seems the epitome of relaxed amiability compared with the atmosphere at Trinity High School, Monument, USA, where a sick dread informs the daily lives of most pupils, while the others, the Vigils, spread the fear. In Robert Cormier's **Beyond the Chocolate War** (Gollancz £7.95), Obie turns from following Archie Costello, Vigil-leader and mental-torture-adept, to hating him. Jerry Renault, just about recovered from the beating received in *The Chocolate War*, comes back only to face more of the same.

It's a chilling picture of the insidious ease with which power, sadism and fear can contaminate a whole institution — all the potential horrors of the world writ small. In Archie's view, 'You'll always have me wherever you go and whatever you do...Know why, Obie? Because I'm you. I'm all the things you hide inside in you...' All ends badly, very badly. There remains, though, the possibility of not giving in and, tucked away within the story, Jerry's agonisingly self-taught solution of seeking out what he fears and meeting it unresistingly.

Margaret Mahy's **The Catalogue of the Universe** (Dent £6.95) provides a more sunlit environment for New Zealander Angela May. Blessed with beauty, red hair, a sparky personality, brains, friends and a mother who

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scythes grass by moonlight because she feels like it, Angela considers herself disadvantaged all the same — by want of a proper car, possession of an outside lavatory (only) and total absence of a father. Her decision to rectify the last precipitates a day 'in which time had been so concentrated that Angela had been born, loved, orphaned, had died and been reborn all during a single morning'.

Margaret Mahy doesn't forget that there is 'a ferocious world beyond the fox-faced teddy' but sees it as also quirky and lovely and full of possibility; adolescence is the time to believe that 'you're the one who's going to get it right', even if mutilation lies only the slip of a brake-pedal away. Angela shares with her friend Tycho a fascination with matters like the square root of two and the moons of Jupiter which outlast emotional pains and the novel moves lightly, without sentimentality, to something of a girl-wakes-up-to-boy-next-door conclusion. Like Robert Cormier, Margaret Mahy, twice Carnegie medal winner, uses language with care and affection to enormous effect.

For fantasy-lovers there's Robin McKinley's **The Hero and the Crown** (Julia MacCrae £7.50) whose protagonist also has red hair — a sure sign of character *and* beauty, even if contributing to her childhood's outcast status since it comes not from her kingly father but from her dead, alien, witch mother. All the legends of misfits who blossom into heroes and saviours lurk here, as Aerin trains herself with horse and sword to be a dragon-killer, suffers terrible injury before finally coming into all her powers, saving her kingdom — and taking the boy-next-door as consort, if with hidden regrets. Bald summary does not do justice to the book's completeness, its engaging imagination.

Compared with many a batch of adult novels, the books reviewed here are, as a whole, refreshing. This is in part because of their energy and fast-paced story-telling skills, in part because, however bleak the subject matter, they are all on the track of some kind of truth.

Coda: another form of truth telling is collected by Naomi Lewis in **Messages** (Faber £7.95 & £2.95), an anthology aimed at 11-15-year-olds in which the remembered rhythms of childhood, the first intimations of the magic of words — 'Up the airy mountain', 'Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?', 'Dark brown is the river' — mingle with Milton and Shelley, MacNeice and Scannell, haikus and ballads, providing an enticing introduction to poetry reading. □

At face value

Adrianne Blue

Common Fame: The Culture of Celebrity
RICHARD SCHICKEL *Pavilion* £10.95

IN A RUMPLED SUITE at the Dorchester (or was it the Savoy? — these details matter to the fans) Norman Mailer once told me that he was more famous than Hemingway. Not necessarily read by more people, but he had better product identification as a personality. 'Because of television,' he said in that nasal Harvard-Brooklynese. 'Because they *see* me.'

He was right. And according to Richard Schickel, *Time* magazine's film reviewer and a laudatory biographer of several of Hollywood's finest (or anyway most famous), Mailer is dead right about most things concerning celebrity. He may be a ham actor when he plays *nouveau* Hemingway but Mailer knows how to get star billing, and his portraits of the cult figures Marilyn and JFK are, Schickel asserts, vulgar but spot on. All of which tempts me to say read *Marilyn* or *Advertisements for Myself* instead of *Common Fame*, but that would be more witty than wise.

This book is an engrossing, anecdotal social history of celebrity-mongering, from the first tabloid, Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mirror*, to 'the ultimate tabloid', television. 'First basic assumption: there was no such thing as a celebrity prior to the beginning of the twentieth century.' Royals, Franz Liszt, Jenny Lind had their swooners, but always from a respectful distance.

Press photographers changed everything. One who was sent to take pictures of Queen Marie of Rumania disembarking from an ocean liner is said to have shouted, 'A little more leg, Queenie.' And thus was born the 'photo opportunity'. 'Second basic assumption: the history of celebrity and the history of communications technology over the last century are very closely linked.'

Schickel cites Jacques Ellul as his chief mentor and certainly the book's theory is not original, but this is a useful, readable synthesis, one that explains thoroughly why the bourgeois personality profile is here to stay, even come the revolution.

The 'democratic ideal' of building an ever better informed populace — one motivation of communications technologists — got drowned in the flood of information. Too much in too many editions. To keep up, we required 'simplifying symbols — usually people, sometimes objects — that crystallize and personify an issue, an ideal, a longing...'

Like tabloid journalists of old, television crews look for 'emblematic figures' to make abstract issues accessible. What matter if ideas get a little *lumpen* on the way to transmission. For every ideology or event there is a spokesperson, an emblem. Mailer = literature. Walesa = dissidence. Reagan = politics. A gaunt Ethiopian = famine. 'These are the movie stars of the world of (simplified) ideas.'

Schickel fleshes this out with some lovely historical examples, and though he concentrates on American instances, there is much for the British reader here. Jack Kennedy, the first President who perceived the people's desire for 'a leading man' and played it very Hollywood eventually resulted in the actor who played it very political. Jeffrey Archer's elevation to a top rung of the Tory party is a case with some similarities, and who knows what else Saatchi and Saatchi are getting up to.

'Each new development in comunications has increased our illusion of intimacy with the celebrated.' This phony intimacy has given rise to assassinations by people who want a closer relationship to father-figure Reagan or role model John Lennon or the female movie star who doesn't answer adoring fan letters.

American loners pull the trigger to make history instantly. Says Schickel, this is because they realise more than most of us do how influential celebrities have become. They sell products, they sell ideas, they sell political candidates. Celebrities now are 'the chief agents of moral change in the United States'. May God have mercy on our souls. □

A minute's silence

(for Michael Heffernan)

Michael Hofmann

A seagull murmur or worse — he kept it quiet,
went at his work, made plans. One of his last,
he produced Hugo von Hofmannsthal's fictional
abdication, the Lord Chandos Letter, for radio:
a droll package of *M*s and *H*s and *F*s and *N*s —

his, and Hofmannsthal's, and mine, the translator's . . .
The studio was round the corner from Broadcasting House,
in a shakier, worse-favoured building,
hollowed under by the Piccadilly and Victoria Lines
drumming through Regent Street. One minute in three

was useless, a minute's silence, to avoid picking up
the awful judder at the heart of the city . . .
A year on, I'm in a new house and he's dead.
Traffic noises, clean slates hammered down —
to hear the banging, you wouldn't give them a price.

I'm sitting coiled over my letter of condolence,
left elbow out, head down, the verbs tramping stiffly
into the furthest corners of mood and tense, closed
conditionals, Latin and peculiar pluperfects,
like Hofmannsthal's . . . 'I had had no idea.'

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ART

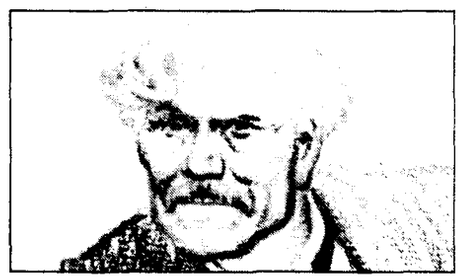
Quartered, drawn and hung

John Spurling

Incisive, deflating and farcical, Low's cartoons gave a running commentary on Europe from the Twenties to the Sixties. They are currently on show in Colonel Blimp and Friends *at the National Portrait Gallery*

DAVID LOW IS FAMOUS for the TUC carthorse, for Colonel Blimp and for his steady ridicule of the Fascist dictators in the Thirties. He was born in New Zealand in 1891 and came to England via Australia, where he had already made a name for himself by the time he was in his mid-twenties. He never undervalued his own talent (except to insist that it mostly consisted of hard work) and was a resolute self-promoter who found, like several more recent swashbucklers from down-under, that the stiff and stuffy old mother country easily succumbed to his mixture of breezy charm and hard criticism.

Some of his criticism, indeed, proved a little too hard. Although, when he moved from *The Star* to Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard* in 1927, he had a special clause in the contract guaranteeing his independence, Beaverbrook had a reciprocal right (which Low never mentioned in his autobigraphy) not to publish cartoons. Low's comment on Ascot, with snobs of both sexes crawling into the Royal Enclosure on their bellies, was one that didn't appear and he modified his version of Lord Rothermere (who had helped finance Beaverbrook's purchase of *The Evening Standard*) as a fat nanny pushing a pram and saluting Hitler and Mussolini, so as to make the nanny unrecognisable. A few years later he was persuaded, in the interests of not enraging the dictators, to discontinue his strip cartoon Hit



Above: the futility of appeasement, from the *Evening Standard* of 9 November 1933; below: Ramsay Macdonald and chin (1926)

and Muss, but bounced back with a composite buffoon called Muzzler; and he refused to soften his attack on the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936.

The secret of Low's success, as a radical working for a Tory paper, was the sympathy that he managed to elicit for even his most evil targets, though he saw, as many did not, that there was no point in appeasing the dictators. His scenario was always a farce, in which the empty, pompous and overbearing made fools of themselves, never an apocalypse. He could rise to powerful images of defiance, such as the 1940 cartoon of a British soldier standing on a black rock in a mountainous sea under a black sky and shaking his fist at a flight of German bombers — 'Very well, alone' is the caption — and he could catch the crass brutality of the Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956 with a single Russian soldier and half a tank occupying half his picture, but there is still an element of comfort in the size and obvious physical strength of the Hungarian worker dominating the other side from a higher position. Low believed in the triumph of sanity and intelligence over lunacy and stupidity and his cartoons, by their very clarity and strength, hold horror and chaos at bay.

The exhibition is somewhat cramped at the National Portrait Gallery and it is not always easy to work oneself back into the precise circumstances Low was satirising, but it covers his whole oeuvre from New Zealand juvenilia to the last ten years of his life, 1953-63, when he was working for the *Manchester Guardian*; and it particularly brings out, in a selection of his original drawings, for the sets of portrait caricatures published in the *NS* (of which Low became a director in 1933), his genius for likeness and character. That ability to penetrate another personality and sharpen our understanding of it with exact exaggeration is no doubt what makes even his Nazis look faintly endearing now, though at the time they were sufficiently wounded to put Low on their death list. The show is accompanied and much of its contents illustrated in a paperback with a useful biographical and critical text by Colin Seymour-Ure (Secker and Warburg £9.95).

GENERALLY WHEN I rant on in this column, calling for the Tate to improve its lighting or its buying, for the Arts Council to use part of the Hayward Gallery to display some of its incomparable collection of post-war British art, or for those responsible for last year's Turner Prize to seek voluntary exile or shoot themselves, the reaction is disappointing, not to say nil. But reviewing the first International Contemporary Art Fair in London at the beginning of 1984, I suggested that it would be better to hold a smaller fair for less well-heeled customers and urged the Arts Council or the Contemporary Art Society to try it, with a ceiling of £500 on the works for sale. The CAS, under its new chairperson Caryl Hubbard, immediately went into action and revealed, with its first **Art Market** last autumn, that there were indeed plenty of buyers for good contemporary art at modest prices.

This year's CAS Art Market, held last week at the same venue in Covent Garden (Smiths Galleries), was sponsored by Sainsbury's and was an even greater success, with sales well up on last year (of the 126 artists taking part only ten failed to sell anything and one sold 16 paintings) and a flow of at least 3,000 visitors through the galleries during the four-day event. British art doesn't rate very highly at present in the narrow world of international contemporary art, which is dominated by a few dealers and in which reputations are inflated and sustained by the manipulation of international exhibitions and state museums. But here, in this spread of mostly domestic, often humorous and very seldom posturing work in a great many different styles, is the evidence of a quite different level of activity and of a much more broadly and solidly based standard of quality. On this small scale, once a year, the CAS is showing us the value, not just the bargain price, of contemporary British art.

I should have mentioned a few weeks ago, when I was listing those responsible for siting Kevin Atherton's outdoor sculpture **On Reflection** in Islington, the Public Art Development Trust, a charitable body devoted to encouraging such projects through the many obstacles that beset them. Sorry. □

Colonel Blimp *is at the National Portrait Gallery until 12 January, then in Newport and Hull*

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FILMS

Attracting quite an audience

John Coleman

Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters (15)
Lumiere; Electric Screen
Letter to Brezhnev (15)
Classic Royal, Charing Cross Road; Classics, Tottenham Court Road and Chelsea; Screen on the Green; Odeon, Kensington
The Supergrass (15)
ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue; selected release
Argie
ICA Cinematheque, from 13 November

YUKIO MISHIMA first came to international acclaim with his novel *Confessions of a Mask*, in which a Japanese boy examined a developing sexual preference for men. His last bid for world attention was ritual suicide at the Eastern Army's headquarters in Tokyo on 25 November 1970. With four uniformed members of his Emperor-worshipping private militia, the Shield Society, he had trussed up a general, stepped out on to a roof to orate to hastily assembled and largely hostile troops, before withdrawing to commit the final, carefully rehearsed gesture.

When the American screen writer and director Paul Schrader felt a compulsion to make a film about this extraordinary, driven man, he ran into foreseeable flak. Mishima's widow was against an exploration of her husband's overt homosexuality and various far-right groups, having embraced the dead artist and showman supreme as their cult hero, were highly hostile, fearful of what a foreigner might come up with in the dicey area of politics. These fears were probably shared at governmental levels. Certainly the resultant movie has yet to be shown in Japan.

Famous last words in Tokyo

Pause between words in Liverpool

For Schrader did persist, preparing a script with his brother Leonard (who was teaching over there in 1970 and has a Japanese wife), and **Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters** is the strategic, triple-layered 'biographical' outcome. Within the subdued-colour framework of that fatal, culminating day are deployed black-and-white fragments from childhood onwards, significant psychological moments in forming the strange adult, together with theatrically stylised episodes from three of the novels, these in strong primary colours and — in many ways — the most enticing and visually exciting matter on display.

The spare, expressionistic sets are the remarkable work of Eiko Ishioka, elsewhere renowned for her photo-essay of Faye Dunaway eating an egg. Nothing in the entire film is more shattering than a scene from the novel *Runaway Horses* (itself a sort of premonitory acting-out of Mishima's private army, Imperial fanaticism and ultimate way of death), during which a young cadet moves from a mock-forest to slash through a giant canvas on the assumed solid wall of his businessman-target: extravagant but something only cinema could provide.

And gradually a composite portrait of Mishima (played by the stage and screen star Ken Ogato) emerges. Whether it is much more than a spiritual Identikit is the question that then proposes itself. The monochrome child is aroused by a picture of arrow-torn Saint Sebastian and — as the narrating voice of Roy Scheider makes clear — goes on to masturbate: a much later flashback picks this up, along with the relentless, narcissistic body-building depicted in bits from *Kyoko's House*, to show the grown Mishima flashing his physique for photographers, even posing as that same pierced saint who had troubled him as a kid. By indirections find directions out, perhaps, and all that gym-torture is seen to proceed from a male lover's taunt about Mishima's flabbiness as they dance, the one explicit avowal of his homosexuality.

Attempts, too, are made towards articulating the tackier all-of-a-piece aestheticism that governed the man. 'Creating a beautiful work of art and becoming beautiful oneself are identical,' quotes the voice-over. (The four chapter headings are: Beauty, Art, Action and Harmony of Pen and Sword.) Some impossible manner of purity is striven after. That sacrificial cadet in *Runaway Horses* insists it *is* attainable, but at what cost? Immediately before, he has talked of turning 'your life into a line of poetry written with a splash of blood'. And, as the film will not shirk from visualising in flashback, there is a certain grim irony in the fact that the Mishima who later drills his own élite on the roof of the National Theatre has, as a young dreamer of martial glory, deliberately failed his call-up medical by pretending to be tubercular.

It may be that the closing scenes, with Mishima strutting in front of that roped-and-gagged general, bring us closest to the heart of the ambiguous man. He lets drop that he himself designed the Shield Society uniforms, 'with some help from De Gaulle's tailor', a line almost too good to be true. Then comes, as it were, the confession that he has found the long-sought mask, that his private and public lives have fused in a form of giant theatricals. About to deliver that drowned-out, barely coherent curtain-speech, he turns to his four companions. 'Our little drama has attracted quite an audience,' he says. 'Time for the last act.' And unwillingly one grants a degree of pathos to the finale, unwillingly because one has never got really near to what made Mishima

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Dim Sun Hong Kong-born Wayne Wang's appealing music portrait (with visual bows to Japanese master Ozu) of Chinese family in freshly observed San Francisco: widowed mother, unmarried daughter, cheery uncle. Touching, humorous, astringent, a young director's invitation to 'only connect'.

Prizzi's Honour With genial fidelity to Richard Condon's triple-cross comedy of mafioso manners, veteran John Huston keeps it in *his* 'family' as daughter Anjelica pops wickedly up to net Jack Nicholson's bemused killer, love-torn Charley, from a killing new wife (Kathleen Turner).

The Purple Rose of Cairo Woody Allen's brilliantly faceted, sad-funny fantasy, as relevant to our depressed Eighties as its Depression Thirties. Actor in idiot movie descends from New Jersey screen briefly to woo movie-mad, downtrodden housewife, making chaos and whoopee (Mia Farrow, Jeff Daniels).

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tick. An unkind reading, which I rather favour, of this ambitious film would have it as a long, long trailer for what genuinely was his bequest: not the outward acts and details of a publicity-seeking, pretty appalling fellow, but his novels and nothing but the novels. Trust the tales, not the teller.

Begun on a shoestring, helped out by Palace Pictures and completed by Channel 4, Chris Bernard's zany **Letter to Brezhnev** bowls along with such bawdy, four-letter conviction that the sentimentality threatening to usurp the fantasy never has much chance. Liverpool, in all its seedy grandeur, is a resilient, wonderfully explored central character in this tale of two young women from a nearby suburb, one bouncily enduring life in a chicken-processing factory, the other restlessly on the dole. The scabrous script has them picking up two Russian sailors in town for a day and a night. Beautifully brassy Teresa (Margi Clarke) knows her priorities: 'Drinking vodka, getting fucked and stuffing chickens — that's what I dream of.' More romantic Elaine (Alexandra Pigg) falls for her departed Peter (Peter Firth), writes that Brezhnev letter and gets a plane ticket to the USSR in return. Nothing will stop her going. Home-brewed stuff with an ironic tang. The women are great.

Sadly, the Comic Strip gang's **The Supergrass**, directed by Peter Richardson and written by him and Pete Richens, loses its cast and its way in a West Country tale about a simple chap's pretence of drug-smuggling to impress a girlfriend landing him among real law-enforcers and villains. Endure it if you must for a handful of funny lines, a Draculan police inspector and some inspired mugging from Alexei Sayle as a pertinacious motorbike cop. In **Argie**, a junk-collector's curiosity, Jorge Blanco directs, scripts and plays himself into a corner as a confused and lying Argentinian exile in London who declares war on us during that conflict: his amenable 'rape' victim (Christine Plisson) lends a little street-wise chirpiness. □

MUSIC

Theme tunes

Andrew Clements

Music of Eight Decades
Festival Hall/Radio Three

THE RETURN of *Music of Eight Decades* to the South Bank has not quite the same glamour and originality it had on its first appearance in 1981. Now, integrated series of concerts are everywhere, often suggesting that groupings around a vague theme has become a substitute for genuine flair and imagination in building programmes. The advantages to the concert promoter are obvious: if an audience can be persuaded to buy subscriptions to an entire series, half the battle of promotions is won, the habit of concert-going has been established and a genuine following may be built up.

Eight Decades was the first contemporary-music series to do that at an orchestral level — the London Sinfonietta's composer-based series, which began with the massive Schoenberg and Gerhard celebration in 1972, are slightly different — and demonstrated that there was an audience for this kind of supposedly specialist concert.

That first series, though, had rather different aims. It began as a joint initiative between the BBC and the London Orchestral Concert Board in an attempt to drag the independent orchestras kicking and screaming into the 20th century. In retrospect, perhaps, its tactics were a bit crude — the big four orchestras suddenly found themselves without Arts Council funding for any 20th-century works they might have wished to include in their own Festival Hall promotions. In the event, only three of the four orchestras took part in the first run of concerts, alongside the BBC Symphony and the ever-willing Sinfonietta. It was sad, but not at all surprising, that the second season in 1983-84 involved only the BBC and the Sinfonietta, and the same is true of the eight concerts that got under way last week. Only the London Symphony Orchestra has shown any willingness to present 20th-century repertory in its own promotions, most recently in the

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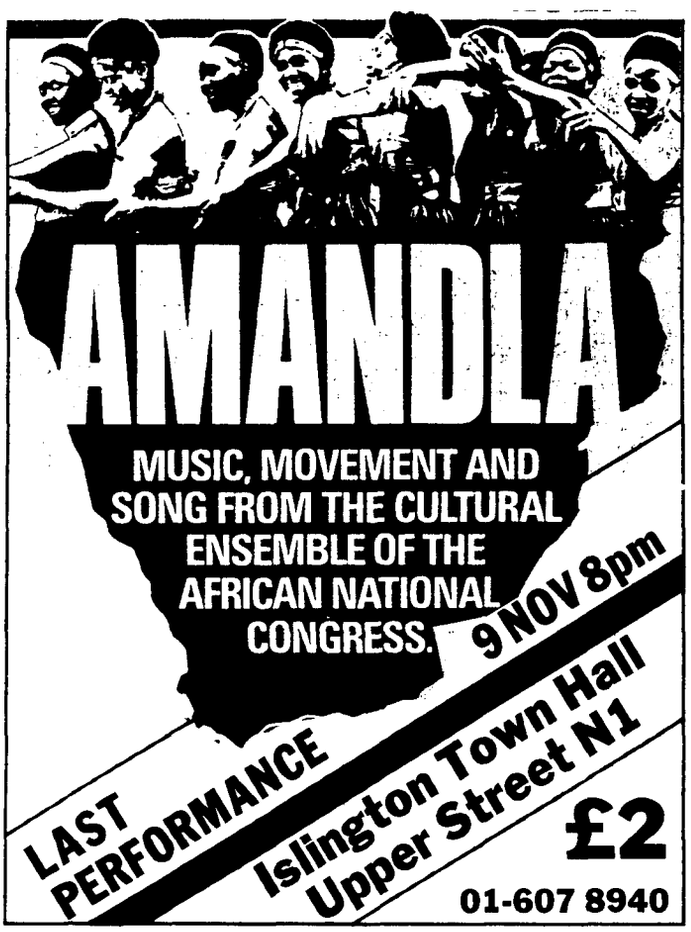
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splendid *Mahler, Vienna and the Twentieth Century* festival, which has just completed its second phase. The other independents have been content to do the minimum to avoid any complaints that they steer clear of anything difficult or demanding.

Despite appearing only every two years, *Music of Eight Decades* has definitely established a flavour of its own. It has managed not to become a ragbag of modernist odds and ends; there is an emphasis on particular composers and movements, mainly at the expense of Expressionism — only two works from the second Viennese School find niches this time and neither of those involves a full symphony orchestra. Bartok seems peculiarly popular at present, with a generous representation in last summer's Proms and now two big works here; Stravinsky's late serial masterpiece *Threni* gets a slot in the BBCSO's March programme. Each concert this time includes a premiere and six of them are newly commissioned works, though the choice of composers for those commissioned seems a shade predictable and the opportunity to give a platform to more neglected figures has been lost. The first programme, however, given by the Sinfonietta conducted by Oliver Knussen, was nicely mixed and full of novelty. The most substantial piece was Maxwell Davies's *Revelation and Fall*, which now seems the most rewarding of his music-theatre products of the 1960s, as well as being the least frequently heard. Charles Wuorinen's unassuming *Canzona* (one of only two American works included this season) received its first British performance, while the new commission was Colin Matthews's *Suns Dance*.

Matthews's *Cello Concerto* was one of the successes of the 1984 Proms, and anyone who got to know his music through that piece may well have been surprised by the rather different sound world of the Sinfonietta work. The difference is not just a matter of texture, the inevitable fining-down from a big symphony orchestra for the concerto to the standard Sinfonietta complement of 14 players: the language is sharper-edged here, the melodic lines less consciously expressive, the structure tighter. But it also seems to me less striking, with fewer of the arresting images that made the *Concerto* so fascinating.

The temptation to write a work that puts the virtuosity of the players to the test is always strong in any piece for the Sinfonietta. While Matthews is better able than most of his contemporaries to create genuinely fast music whose harmonic substance develops instead of remaining static, large stretches of *Suns Dance* seem to get by on their facility rather than the crispness of their ideas. The series of *concertante* solos for wind players is brilliantly written and dramatically staged, but appeared more like a device to sustain interest than an organic part of the argument. But it is a colourful score which, in the context of the series, will have gone down well. □

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THEATRE

Sex for sale

Victoria Radin

Camille
PAM GEMS *Comedy*
The Grace of Mary Traverse
TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER *Royal Court*
Particular Friendships
MARTIN ALLEN *Hampstead*

PAM GEMS's adaptation of **Camille** is armed with ironies and a solid appreciation that life must go on. As we leave the play, with Camille in her coffin and the auctioneer having sold off all her hard-earned effects, Prudence, her former colleague and sort of manageress, sees an opportunity. 'I see you need enjoyment,' she says, thrusting her card into the auctioneer's hand.

After the Garbo film, the Verdi opera and various ballets and plays, the story of the beautifully consumptive 19th-century harlot has entered the repertoire of western myths. It has many compelling elements: the theme of martyrdom for love, the cast of well-born characters, wealth, sex and the youthful and decorative death. Not least, it preys on our hunger for the figure of the seductress who is a victim, the eternal tart with heart lately resurrected by new tales from the mausoleum of Marilyn Monroe.

Pam Gems's version, first seen at The Other Place in Stratford, makes myths for the post-feminist and Marxist age. Everyone in her glittering and useless world is eagerly buying and selling — the rich with their traditional barter of money, the poor with their customary arsenal of flesh. Embodied most unetherially by the strapping Frances Barber, this Camille never lets us forget her peasant origins. Gems invests her with a laundress mother and a backstairs childhood in the great houses of the men who now come to buy her favours. Fondled early by uncles, Camille is bought at 15 by a nobleman who turns her out when she becomes pregnant. In this version, her elderly seducer is also the father of Armand, the young man whom Camille decides to take only for love. He, too, is a victim of his class and claims that Camille is his 'only chance for life'. Gems invests her courtesan with a son — as Dumas' real-life model had — and pins much of her message on her heroine's maternal love, which finally undoes her.

It is in some ways a schematic rendering, but one that is suffused with a comprehensive delight in material pleasures — which Maria Bjornson's set of a circular balcony and gowns that look as if they're meant to be worn most handsomely translates — as well as an understanding of the ways of men and women. When Armand first sees Camille, she is singing a pretty song: feeling his attraction to her, she defiantly changes it to a smutty one. His initial impulse is to handle her brutally: she quickly tames him. But romantic love, especially on a big stage, is always a difficult thing to make credible. The utopian scenes of bucolic bliss strain a bit and the statutory first bedding, which in the theatre is always best left to the imagination, is reduced to a few grunts from Armand in the missionary position.

Under Ron Daniels's direction, Frances Barber and Nicholas Farrell are well matched as lovers. Polly James as the hard-nosed, but not brittle, madam of the establishment, Alphonsia Emmanuel as an elegant copine, Julia Dearden as a silly whore who plays the game correctly and Charles Millham as the dim and very funny Swedish count she ends up marrying gracefully sketch in a world tainted with the class equivalent of original sin which is nevertheless effervescent and capable of goodness. It is a compelling evening.

The wonderfully-named Timberlake Wertenbaker is a highly individual stylist with a flair for dark Sadeian insights that make one jump in one's seat. The eponymous heroine of **The Grace of Mary Traverse**, who is informed by many of the same philosophies as Gems's Camille, is a sheltered adolescent alive in 18th-century London. Egged malevolently on by her class-grudge-bearing servant Mrs Temptwell, she leaves her widowed father's house and goes on a quest for Life — buying her first sexual experience, entering the masculine preserves of the coffee house and the gambling den, taking up prostitution, organising a political rebellion before finally coming to rest at what she sees as a state of grace. It is a picaresque tale out of Hogarth, *Fanny Hill* and *Faust*.

Wertenbaker has a taut, driving linguistic style which Janet McTeer's explosive Mary more than matches. Scenes in which Mary rehearses the gentle art of conversation for her father, or later, disowned and disguised, pleasures him in the street, have a bitter epigrammatic drive. Her sexual initiation is all teasing anticipation and erotic recall. But other episodes are diffuse and meandering and, as the political message about the exploitativeness of the ruling classes increasingly forms its subject, the play becomes confused and goes adrift. When we last see Mary in a rustic hide-out, reconciled with her chastened father and gathered round with illegitimate child and the friends who were her servants, it seems less a state of grace than what we used to call dropping out: Utopias are as difficult as sexual bliss to manage onstage. Danny Boyle's direction exacts attractively vehement performances from Eve Matheson, Tom Chadbon and David Beames, who has the distinction of playing an entire scene naked without seeming in the least embarassed.

Martin Allen's **Particular Friendships** is an occasionally witty but mulishly predictable comedy set in the documentaries department of a television company that coy little references tell us must be the BBC. Its two theses — that TV producers are a bad lot and that it's hell being a lonely career woman — fail to offer any new handles on life. In Michael Attenborough's production, in which everyone struts, frets and declaims, the all-out caricatures come off best — Caroline Bliss as a Sloane-y secretary, Philip Voss as a nihilistic manipulator of women and viewing time. □

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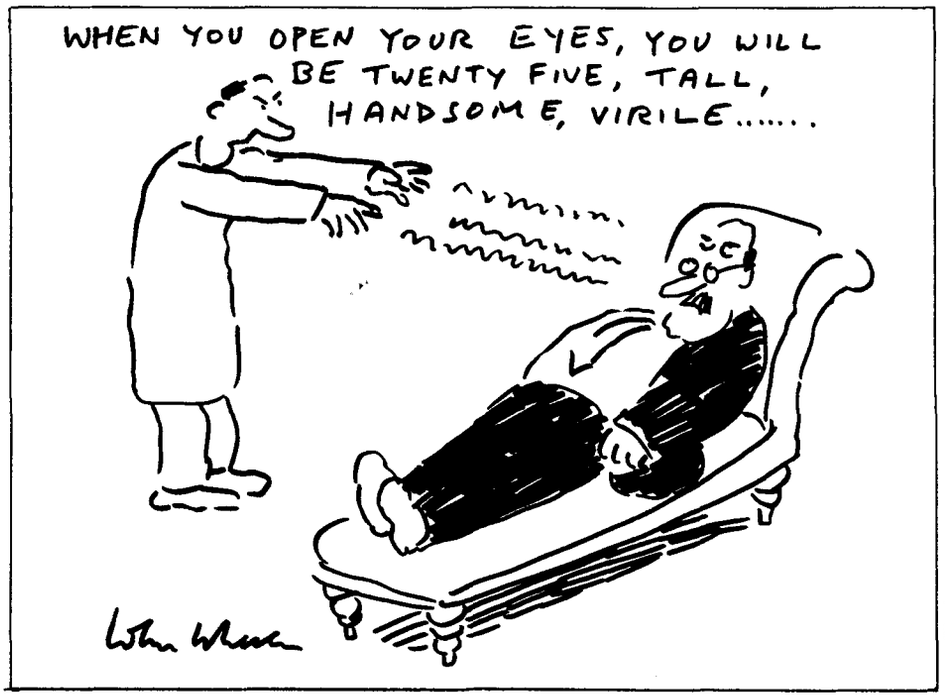

Colin Wheeler

Charmed, I'm sure

David Montrose

LET'S OPEN with some autobiography. Twenty-odd years ago, aged about seven, I underwent one of the most unpleasant experiences of my life. My wart-studded hands having excited the hostility of the school health visitor, I was consigned to the local clinic for treatment. This began with several pain-killing injections in each hand: a procedure which proved — supreme irony — desperately painful and less than totally effective. Then the warts were gouged out with an instrument of torture resembling nail scissors. Finally, a caustic solution was applied to the resulting holes.

Needless to say, the entire proceeding was accompanied by my loud and lachrymose distress. With bandage-swathed hands, I returned to school where friends promptly dubbed me The Invisible Man (a popular TV series of the period). Looking at my hands now, I can still distinguish 17 scars: 11 on the right, six on the left. Originally, there were perhaps twice that number, but the smaller ones have faded with time.

After my wounds had healed, I enjoyed a whole wart-free fortnight before ominous bumps started to appear, some on the exact spots where earlier warts had been. Every patent remedy known to Boots had already failed; so had my own — scratching the warts into bleeding stumps and dousing them with TCP. With the health visitor's next inspection approaching, my mother asked our GP if he could use his influence to prevent my ordeal being repeated. That he might suggest an alternative treatment never occured to us.

In fact, he offered to 'charm' the warts away: a shrewd euphemism to use in front of one who associated hypnotism with zig-zag flashes emanating from the fingertips of evil masterminds in the pages of the *Victor*. I was, of course, willing to try anything. The process turned out to be decidedly unspectacular, simply a matter of lying on a couch while the doctor's quiet voice encouraged me to relax. He asked me to let my right arm 'float upwards' and, to oblige him, or so it seemed, I duly raised it. He asked me to let my eyelids close. I did. He told me my warts would disappear.

By my second session, a week later, they definitely looked smaller. I arrived for the third with clear hands. And that's how they stayed.

Many people have heard this story over the years and the change in reaction indicates how hypnotherapy has come to be accepted. Ten years ago, my recital would provoke disbelief of varying explicitness; today, scepticism is rarely detectable. Nevertheless, though warts — indeed, dermatological conditions generally — respond well to the technique, burning them away remains the standard treatment. The *modus operandi* (I am told), while less harsh nowadays, is still often painful.

In a new book, *If This Be Magic* (Cape £9.95), Guy Lyon Playfair estimates that no more than 3 per cent of Britain's GPs employ hypnotherapy. Only one hospital offers it on the NHS. This despite reliable, well documented evidence that, in addition to skin problems, it can relieve a variety of neurotic symptoms: anxiety, psychosomatic illness, phobias, obsessions, habits and addictions, stammering, over-eating and anorexia, impotence... Hypnotherapy is also of proven value in the alleviation of pain. Furthermore, as Playfair particularly emphasises, there is growing information concerning its physiological applications. For example, using the technique in conjunction with orthodox treatment in cancer cases, a Californian doctor, Bernauer F. Newton, has obtained above-average remission rates and substantial improvements in the length and quality of his patients' lives, while Dr Dabney Ewin of Tulane University, New Orleans, has found that it can help attenuate the 'inflammatory response' in burns cases.

Playfair advances two explanations for the neglect of hypnotherapy. First, that prospective patients regard it as crank medicine, which makes doctors reluctant to propose its use. This, of course, conflicts with my own, admittedly limited, experience which suggests that — these days at least — people view hypnotherapy as a perfectly legitimate procedure. More tellingly, my present GP in the Potteries — one of that 3 per cent — reports that the image of hypnotherapy has never caused him any difficulties. Besides, the lay public has long been more enthusiastic than the medical profession about alternative medicine. As Playfair himself notes, there are almost as many practitioners of it in Britain as there are GPs.

His second explanation seems likelier: that most doctors were just not given the opportunity to study the technique. Despite both the BMA and the Royal Society of Medicine fully approving hypnosis as a therapeutic tool, only four medical schools (at the last count) provide training. Doctors are, of course, free to learn about hypnotherapy for themselves, as did my two GPs. Their education, though, has implicitly encouraged them to consider it outside the domain of accepted medical science.

This article is not intended to suggest that hypnotherapy could profitably supplant whole branches of conventional medicine. For one thing, the technique cannot, any more than conventional medicine, provide sure-fire cures. Like every treatment, it sometimes fails completely even in circumstances where it is usually highly effective. On the other hand, hypnotherapy should not be used — as tends to happen — only in the last resort, when all else has come to nothing. Its rightful place is, to quote Playfair, 'as a standard weapon in the medical armoury'. Those who practise medicine are expected to keep abreast of new developments. Surely this old one — discovered by a disciple of Mesmer's in the 1780s — deserves the same effort. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams
Bookest

'HEROIN screws you up', warned the commercial preceding this year's **Booker Prize** pantomime (C4) in which poor little Art was bullied ever more forcibly to become one of the Ugly Brothers of Capitalism. 'Money screws you up!' Can't you just feel the needle going in? What a relief it is!

One can see the attraction of success as a school prize-giving ceremony for the publishers. It makes them part of the creative process! Art as First Prize quickly reduces the business of writing to the level of business, where everyone feels at home. It isn't deliberate, but that doesn't mean it isn't true.

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Melvyn Bragg, wearing an appropriate joke-shop revolving bow-tie for the occasion, asked Matthew Evans of Faber whether he thought there was a Booker-type novel emerging. A disingenuous Evans thought not. Oh great! In that case I'm going ahead with my story of lavatory-licking at debs' tea-parties in the Fifties, *Oi, You!* They're bound to like that in British North Borneo and the other ex-colonial areas from which Bookers are allowed to come. Only New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Australia were represented in this year's comp., I noticed. Obviously the natives elsewhere aren't restless enough to be writing big books.

For the idea is to make your entry BIG, *Universal* (for the Commonwealth, anyway). Told that his novel *Illywhacker* was about an Australian con-man and liar whose lies had a funny habit of coming true, Peter Carey knew what he had to say: 'Yes, but this has of course certain allegorical resonances, I think.'

No problem with Iris Murdoch's book because, as she pointed out, 'It's about religion and magic.' Likewise Jan Morris's, which reaches the conclusion that 'the innocent are going to inherit the earth' of all things. Spoilsport Kingsley Amis, appearing in the revival of his H.G. Wells commercial about a Victorian bicycle race, said crossly, 'Now that's what *I* call good writing', but nobody seemed to take any notice.

Heralded by mini-commercials for their own books, on came the critics, Greer to the fore. Murdoch's 'strange, rather obvious symbolism was condescending to people,' she thought. Jan Morris's novel about an invented town 'might be a family game for a long car journey'. Where Greer found winner Keri Hulme's novel brimming with talent — 'the discipline can come later' — Paul Theroux found it 'unreadable', 'extremely crudely written: I didn't know where the voices were coming from'. The voice of Keri Hulme, who couldn't be present to receive her prize, came under the sea from America: 'Bloody Hell! You're pulling my leg!' Perhaps they were. The prospect of a film star (Michael Caine) handing over the money to a writer who wasn't there seemed perfectly in keeping with a cash prize for fiction.

After this heroin user's nightmare-come-true, on came **The Happy Alcoholic** (C4), a CineCymru production and, apparently, a true story. 'Un Stori wir', in fact, describing a drunk's obligatory descent into the lower depths followed by his eventual heart-warming rehabilitation. If it was true, it shouldn't have been, because it had exactly the ring of a composite case history cobbled together for an Alcoholics Anonymous leaflet: an older drunk telling a younger one exactly what's in store for him, in flashback, if he carries on like this.

First, he will beat up his wife in public when she sarcastically brings him his diner in the pub. He'll forget this next morning, along with having raped her afterwards. The following morning he'll forget that she's left him. He'll go home to Mum. 'Me Mum thought I drank because of the scar. The scar was a great excuse for everything . . .' His Mum may have thought that, but we could see straight away that the scar covering the right side of his face was a piece of writing caught from *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, a book which was mentioned from time to time, in case we hadn't noticed.

The sight and sound of our paunchy hero drinking, smoking, coughing and slobbering around the place as his life, job, marriage, family, even his hobby (he is a gifted chorister) fall to pieces around his feet, looks more like a hint to budding dipsos that alcoholism is bad for you than a piece of original theatre. From callous infidelity and brawling, through self-hating mistreatment of his mother, we're into the all-night rubbish dumps with fellow alkie Dickie, who snuffs it horribly under a piece of polythene in a freezing, derelict house. The necessary bottom having been reached, you see, our cypher can now make the prescribed laborious climb back (via the DTs) to his reformed place in the community, thanks to AA and their philosophy of 'one day at a time'.

The whole, long, laboured exposition was so plodding and predictable that even the heavily symbolical scar seemed to perform according to some committee-written script, coming and going with our hero's resolve like a tropical thunder-storm until the sun finally set in the West. Given this programmatic approach to playwrighting (or life) the uniformly excellent performances by all the other actors could do little more than self-destruct as they went along.

In case you care, **Crossroads** (ITV) is 21 and there's a four-page feature in the *TV Times* containing photos of 70 nationally famous tele-stars you've never seen before in your life. □

Naseem Khan

Kids' stuff

THE BRITISH are popularly supposed not to like children. Few clearer examples could be given than the situation of arts for children, almost everywhere the poor relation. Take the case of a children's arts festival: a splendid idea, an annual focus, a provision of the best for the most, a reminder of the creative potential of children themselves. Finland already does it in a much respected event in Helsinki (its eighth festival begins this weekend). The eastern bloc has an honourable record on arts and festivals for children. And Britain? You'd have been hard put to have noticed it, but, yes, we do have a children's festival — just. A three-week event, this year's has recently ended, not in London but in Bristol.

The Bristol Festival for Children was the brainchild of the city's Junior Chamber of Commerce, a response to a situation in which, as the Festival's director Robert Etherington said, it was not traditional to involve children as consumers of children's culture. Beginning last year, the Festival drew in 10,000 children for its mix of multi-art-form performances and workshops, and inevitably found itself an institution that would have to run and run.

But although the Festival could very reasonably be called a success — 15,000 looked like this year's attendance figure a few days before the end — there are some things about it that do not bear too close an examination. What other major multi-centre arts festival (the context in which Bristol must be seen) would begin to countenance carrying on with one full-time worker and a budget, for its 214 events and three weeks' activity, of around £60,000? Little wonder that the Festival, for all its strengths, had the engaging effect, on the day I went, of being held together by string and optimism.

Here we are in the Exploratory, a section with a multiplicity of 'hands on' devices designed to illuminate certain principles of science. A group of kids has seized on a revolving plinth that's set up to demonstrate something about the direction of a water jet in gyrating circumstances. The kids are happily standing on it, whizzing round and round playground-fashion. Water sloshes cheerfully on the interested bystanders. 'We'll have to get more volunteers in,' said an attendant sensibly to her colleague. 'Get on to the local radio station, will you, and get them to put it out.'

But, for all its privations and problems, the Festival has had enough energy this year to grow and change. Lessons were learned from year one, when middle-class children tended to dominate. This year the festival hasn't straddled half-term and has relied to a major degree on schools, both as venues and as sources of schools parties. The result (though inevitably affected by the teachers' dispute) has been to spread the take-up more evenly. The social mix has remained catholic ('I don't want to brand this festival as another community arts event for people who don't have very much,' said Etherington), with Mantis, the National Youth Dance Company, Bristol Symphony Orchestra and so on, but the prices have gone down to 50p per event (with many activities free) and the balance has changed. The outreach element has been developed, making the first two weeks of the Festival a touring event in schools and community centres. The third week saw it based in the Children's Warehouse.

The Warehouse is a terrific idea — a large, central space in which something was going on every day for nine hours non-stop — performances, book fair, workshops, exhibitions — the evolution of the environment added to daily (or minutely) by young participants, music try-out section, the Exploratory. In theory, the previous fortnight was to feed in to the Warehouse and make it the visible heart of a hitherto geographically unfocussed festival, a final celebration.

The problem with celebrations is that they are notoriously difficult to organise. They might appear spontaneous but, lift the backcloth, and you'll find sweating figures toiling at machinery behind the scenes. The Festival for Children could have done with a few of them in its Warehouse week. It had hired itself a vast two-storey quayside warehouse usually used for commercial exhibitions. Like many spaces of that type, it was little more than a bleak shell, something for others to fill; and, since part of the celebration's ethos was that it would build itself over the week, when I went on the second day it looked bare and cheerless. Things were *beginning* to happen: sheets of paper with cooperative townscapes were being

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pinned up gradually on screens; an urbanscape of the future (in which people will live in cardboard boxes) was being developed in workshop groups; but acres of space and shivery air lay in between.

The children themselves, it must be said, were not at all daunted. They listened attentively, in a rough and ready theatre area, to Merseyside Young People's Theatre's excellent *Drink the Mercury*, a harrowing account of the way in which industrial waste killed and maimed people in the Japanese fishing village of Minamata. They watched Weather Music Inc appreciatively in their innovative mix of music and mime. They loved Toni Arthur's story-telling. They milled round the Exploratory cheerfully, bashing and banging bits in the movable devices, not too worried (or, at least, not the ones I talked to) about the science behind them. Since several of the captions were incredibly obscure, this was not suprising. Drop a pingpong ball on a silver cup with a red upstanding centre and its action is explained as follows: 'The mirror is parabolic in crossection and pingpong balls (or light) moving parallel to the axis are reflected to the focus (marked by the red ball).' This, unlike the wonderfully clear captions for the devices in Bradford's Museum of Photography, is double dutch to me.

For all that, the event housed a great deal of energy, many first-class ideas and a lot of commitment. What it needs are the conditions in which those ideas can be more fully thought out: more money and better organisation; both to capitalise on the gains made and to scotch the idea that children's art has to be second-rate. □

Weekend competition

No 2898 **Set by E.O.Parrott**

Could we please have sonnets on hearing that the first Santa Claus of the season has taken up residence in a department store? Deadline 21 November.

No 2895 **Set by E.O.Parrott**

Misunderstandings of famous lines of verse on a par with 'Gladlie, the cross-eyed bear' (or, as Cynthia Hall corrects us, 'Gladly, *my little* cross-eyed bear').

Report **by Rosie Hughes**

What a lot of groan-moaners you are. 'This comp is, I fear, Too Hard', 'I obviously lack that mental perversion that instinctively grasps the wrong end of the drift...', 'Hellishly difficult!', 'How could this be so difficult?' and so on. Honestly, treasures, you didn't do *badly*. Some of you went a bit over the top (I mean seriously, Paul, your auricular tunnels would have to be perfectly *swimming* in wax to hear my dear old Dylan's line as 'The nurse that through the greenhouse drives the car') but £3 each for the plausible-witty mis-hearings printed below.

'Had we but whirled enough in time...'
D.A. PRINCE

'Say not thus, Truggle, naughty bailiff...'
M.E. AULT

'Must we two bed indeed? Well then...'
J.J. MALING

'And my fingers wandered idly/Over the noisy Keays...'
CYNTHIA HALL

'God is walking His porpoise out...'
ALAN CLARK

'The Church's one found Asian...'
V. ERNEST COX

'I will make you vicious old men...'
FOWLER

'Theresa Greenhill, fire away!'
FRANK PURCELL

'And did the Count de Nance dive in?'
DAVID TOLEY

'Why sup ale and wine, fond lover?'
M.H. COX

'Summaries are coming in...'
KATIE MALLETT

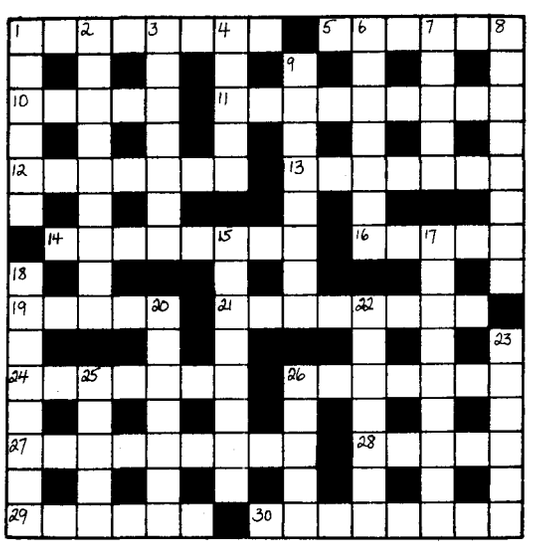
'I could not love the deer so much, loved I not on a moor.'
ALISON PRINCE

'A Band of Hope all you who ain't on beer. . .'
GERARD MORRIS

'With his cruel Bowie laid full low/The harmless Albert Ross...'
D.E. POOLE

Weekend Crossword 1498

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1498, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 19 November.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

ACROSS

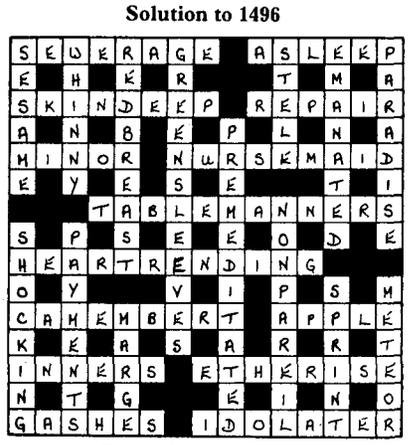
1. There is a measure in motion for expansion (8)
5. Place of work which is not cooled? (6)
10. The point about a letter being prepared for headquarters (5)
11. Is the crowd about to pay court to an author? (9)
12. Played a point with too much backing (7)
13. Majestic Frenchman (7)
14. Something to play which keeps one class inside another (8)
16. Rent for a port (5)
19. Service trees? (5)
21. The listener goes in for writing and takes precautions (8)
24. One who makes modifications is more suitable after a time (7)
26. Unfortunately not lean in front of a friend (7)
27. Repetition gives one proportion in number (9)
28. Bar in refusing others permission (5)
29. Afford about a shilling for a few here and there (6)
30. Inventor who puts a mark on a shallow dish (8)

DOWN

1. One is in an unhappy way, being a pervert (6)
2. One page is devoted to work for agents (9)
3. Understatement to count among untruths (7)
4. Nymph might be disguised as Diana (5)
6. Plunders food over a long period (7)
7. Clubs as a means of restricting liberty (5)
8. See stand redesigned to provide the last places (3,5)
9. The bird would have to put something on if there were no warmth (8)
15. Writer the reverse of plump and delicate (8)
17. Might pall possibly although it is bright (9)
18. Illnesses of a girl when men are around (8)
20. Persian governors cause Greek cities to rise up (7)
22. I stared about, being on horseback (7)
23. She shows this person holding a liberal effort up (6)
25. Nut needed for spare car wheel (5)
26. Loving adult as film star (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1496



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A number of local authorities have formed the Centre for Local Strategies, a Company limited by guarantee, to assist and complement their initiatives in the field of employment and economic development. In particular, the Centre will be aiming to develop economic analysis and strategy on a national basis such that maximum attention is paid to the role of local authorities in encouraging employment and economic development. The Centre is located in Manchester and its main activities will include major research and policy papers, seminars, conferences, a regular journal and newsletter and the establishment of databases.

The Publications/Press Officer will be responsible for arranging production of research and other reports, including design, print buying, checking, distribution and press launching. She/he will edit and produce the newsletter and journal, will be responsible for forward planning of news and feature items and relations with the press. She/he will probably have a background in journalism and be committed to the policies of the Centre.

Application forms and further particulars are available from:

The Finance and Administration Manager,
Centre for Local Economic Strategies,
Heron House, Brazennose Street, Manchester M2 5HD
Tel: 061-834 7036.

This is a re-advertisement and previous applicants need not re-apply.

Closing date 18 November 1985.

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies is an equal opportunities employer and positively welcomes applications from women and men regardless of their racial, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sexuality or responsibilities for dependents.

The post is open to job sharing.

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY

responsible to the Head of the TUC Trade Union Education Department for particular management responsibilities of the TUC's National Education Centre in Hornsey, North London, including: domestic staff; finance; bookings and services for courses arranged by the TUC and affiliated unions; liaison with TUC staff responsible for trade union education work and officers of affiliated unions.

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Write for further details and application form quoting reference **TUE/2** to:

The General Secretary, Trades Union Congress, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS.

The closing date for applications is 22 November 1985.

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A vacancy has arisen in the Research Section at our Head Office for a Research Assistant. The successful candidate will undertake research on a range of trade union issues of concern to NUPE including training and economic issues.

Candidates will be expected to show a commitment to the Labour Movement, an ability to undertake research and a willingness to work with others. A good degree and some knowledge of the public services would be an advantage.

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NUPE is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from women and men from all sections of the community irrespective of their sex, race, ethnic origin, colour, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or religion.

Application forms may be obtained by writing on a postcard to Maureen Underwood, National Union of Public Employees, 20 Grand Depot Road, London SE18 6SF to whom they should be returned by **Wednesday 27 November 1985.**

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Application forms and detailed job description available from the Staff Officer (A/LDL), Town Clerk's Department, Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2LA (061-234 3078).

Closing date for receipt of applications: 22 November 1985

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The course can be taken either full-time for one (calendar) year, or on a part-time basis for one day a week for two years. A small number of studentships will be available for full-time students.

The closing date for applications is 20 February 1986. For prospectus and application form, contact

The Secretary, Postgraduate School of Applied Social Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD7 1DP

PURSUITS

MALE, YOUTHFUL 63, amateur musician, divorce and sale of house pending, seeks male(s) or female(s) in similar or compatible situation to explore possible avenues of co-operation and mutual support. Box (45) 1824.

WELL TRAVELLED professional man (42), 'fringe' interests, seeks 3-4 others (m. and f.) for 1-2 week Christmas trip to Morocco. Phone 01-438 7063 (work), 01-586 5259 (home). Box (45) 1832.

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ACADEMIC, young 45, 5' 8", PhD, seeks attractive, hippy (anatomical sense!) woman, under 5' 6", with left views. Likes music, countryside, laughter, quiet. Prefers cats to kids. Box (44) 1759.

AESTHETICALLY MOTIVATED writer, musical and environmental interests, seeks gentle, perceptive, independent lady. Share idyllic Home Counties retreat. Preferably she's petite, youngish, possibly seeking refuge from sadness, homelessness, betrayal, discord. Genuine. Photographs exchanged. Box (45) 1796.

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ATTRACTIVE LECTURER, seeks attractive, slim/medium woman, any race/circumstance, age to 53 approx., for warm-hearted friendship, theatre, films, etc. London/surrounding areas preferred. Box (45) 1826.

ATTRACTIVE, WARM, vivacious, graduate woman, separated, 46, creative cook, seeks very musical, unattached, professional man, enjoying theatre, cinema, walking, travel, stimulating conversation, reading. Box (45) 1854.

BATH AREA. I am divorced, redheaded, in my 40s, attractive and a keen traveller. I seek a sympathetic male for a discreet affair. Box (45) 1838.

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DEAF LADY (57), seeks friend who enjoys writing/receiving essay-type interesting letters to treasure. Meet occasionally London concert, theatre. Box (45) 1850.

ECONOMIST, Ph.D, 30, author, excellent background, needs a lady for friendship, relationship and life, London elsewhere. Box (44) 1762.

EDINBURGH — FEMALE graduate, mid-forties, attractive, 5' 6½", slim; interests many, seeks male, 35-55, with sense of humour, for enjoyable, but perhaps not permanent relationship. Photo appreciated. Box (45) 1833.

FRIENDLY MALE, 34, own flat, car, in SW London, seeks cuddly, attractive female, late twenties/early thirties, for evenings out, weekends away. Photo appreciated. Box (45) 1794.

GAY CAMBRIDGE guy, 23, affectionate and romantic graduate, seeks caring companionship of attractive, cultured man, 22-35, interested in ambling, idling and sharing quieter moments. Box (45) 1835.

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LEFTISH LAWYER, 30, kind, witty, good-looking, solvent, warm human being, into conversation, culture, languages, cats and gardening, seeks female on same wavelength. London. Photo? Box (45) 1822.

LEFT-WING MAN, 53, pleasant appearance, teacher/author, non-smoker, seeks woman for caring relationship, perhaps children. Interests include literature, music (folk/classical), arts, countryside. Photo appreciated. London area. Box (45) 1836.

LIGHT-HEARTED, good-looking, amusing woman, 45, wants similar man with usual civilised interests for frivolous relationship. Blackheath, SE London. Box (45) 1823.

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LONDON LADY, 30s, seeks man to share passions for tatty Italian villas, tangled formal gardens, obelisks, oysters, Watteau, woodsmoke, Cavalcanti, hot sand, calm seas. Box (45) 1827.

LONDON MALE, 52, seeks unattached, sensuous female, up to 65, for fun and friendship. Plump ladies welcome, nationality immaterial. Replies with phone number please. Box (45) 1840.

LOVABLE, VIVACIOUS, disorganised, sensitive divorced female seeks warm, perceptive, intelligent male, 45 +, for unfrenzied, growing relationship, solidly friendship based. Box (45) 1773.

LOVELY WOMAN, 40, graduate, seeks decent man, London area, interested in art, theatre etc. for maybe long-term relationship. Box (45) 1842.

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Norwich

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Further details from the Establishment Officer, University of East Anglia, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7TJ to whom applications shoud be sent by 30 November 1985.

MAGAZINE

FIRES WILL BE STARTED. New arts culture/politics magazine — coming in 1986. Assistance, contributions and support needed. For more information please send s.a.e. to: 3 Bodney Road, London E8 1AY.

FINANCIAL

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LECTURES

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON. The 1985 Stamp Memorial Lecture entitled: 'ON THE ECONOMICS OF DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A CONSENSUS' will be given by *Dr I. G. Patel (Director, The London School of* Economics and Political Science, University of London) at 6 p.m. on Thursday, 21 November 1985 in the Beveridge Hall at the University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Admission free, without ticket.

MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Informal short talk & questions. 'How should we treat others?' 8 p.m. 10 Nov. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

HOLIDAYS/TRAVEL

ARTS & GROWTH CENTRE, SPAIN. Dec., Jan. complete 'live-in' programme for beginners & advanced. Drawing, painting, printmaking, Hatha Yoga. Includes Granada excursion. Also booking: special Brazil Course Sept '86. Write: Rutherford, Canillas de Albaica, (Malaga), Spain.

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AGENDA

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FRI 8 NOV

MIND-DAY CONFERENCE 'Mental Health in the Nuclear Age.' Examines how nuclear defence policies affect the mental health of individuals, and asks if we are more 'healthy' with the bomb. Speakers include: Dr Dorothy Rowe and Dr James Thompson. School of Pharmacy, Brunswick Square, London WC1. Cost £25, £9 unwaged, includes coffee, lunch, tea. Details/application forms from: Aiban Wiseman, MIND, 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED. Tel 01-637 0741.

TUES 12 NOV

TRADE UNION CND. Public Meeting **'Arms Conversion: An International Perspective.'** Speaker: Inga Thorsson, leading international expert on arms conversion. 7.45 p.m. Committee Room 10, House of Commons (room booked by Gavin Strang MP). Further Details Andrew Hewett 01-250 4010.

THURS 14 NOV

SHEPTON MALLETT, Somerset. **Malcolm Harper,** Director United Nations Association of Great Britain, speaks on Disarmament at 'The Centre', 8.00 p.m. Free. Disabled welcome. Details Evercreech 830741.

TUES 19 NOV

Launch Meeting for the WORLD PEACE ACTION PROGRAMME. Central Hall, Westminster at 7 p.m. Speakers include Fenner Brockway; Krzysztof Ostrowski (UN New York). Music from Musicians Against Nuclear Arms. Tickets on the door £1.00, unwaged 50p or from World Disarmament Campaign (UK), 238 Camden Rd., London NW1 9HE.

SAT 23 NOV

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIALISM. A day of debate and discussion presented by *Marxism Today* and London Communist Party. Clapham Community Project, Venn St., SW4. (Clapham Common tube — Northern Line). Fee 50p, 25p unwaged. Cheap lunch available. Creche, limited access but assistance available.

TUES 26 NOV

SUPPORT MAIRE O'SHEA and protest against 'Prevention of Terrorism' Act. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1. 7.30 p.m. With Dr O'Shea, Clare Short MP, Geoff Bell, Jeremy Corbyn MP. Organised by Socialist Society, 01-734 8501. Admission 50p.

TUES 26 NOV — WED 27 NOV

DEMOLISH DIVIS — an exhibition showing why Belfast's Divis Flats are called 'the worst housing in Europe'. 10.00 a.m. — 6.00 p.m. Bradshaw Room, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. (Enquiries: TCPA 01-930 8903).

WED 27 NOV

EPSOM & EWELL CND are showing the film 'Eight Minutes to Midnight' at Bourne Hall, Ewell at 8 p.m. After the film Dr Douglas Holdstock of the Medical Campaign against Nuclear Weapons will be holding a Question Time session on aspects highlighted by the film. Admission free. Full wheelchair access. Info: Peter Brooker, Epsom (78) 21348.

SAT 30 NOV

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF LABOUR HISTORY Autumn Conference. RELIGION AND THE PEOPLE. Birkbeck College, University of London. All Welcome. Admission £1. Enquiries to: David Englander, Faculty of Arts, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.

WED 4 — THURS 5 DEC

NEW FORMS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT. TCPA Annual Conference to be held in Swansea. Details: Sally Scarlett, TCPA, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. 01-930 8903.

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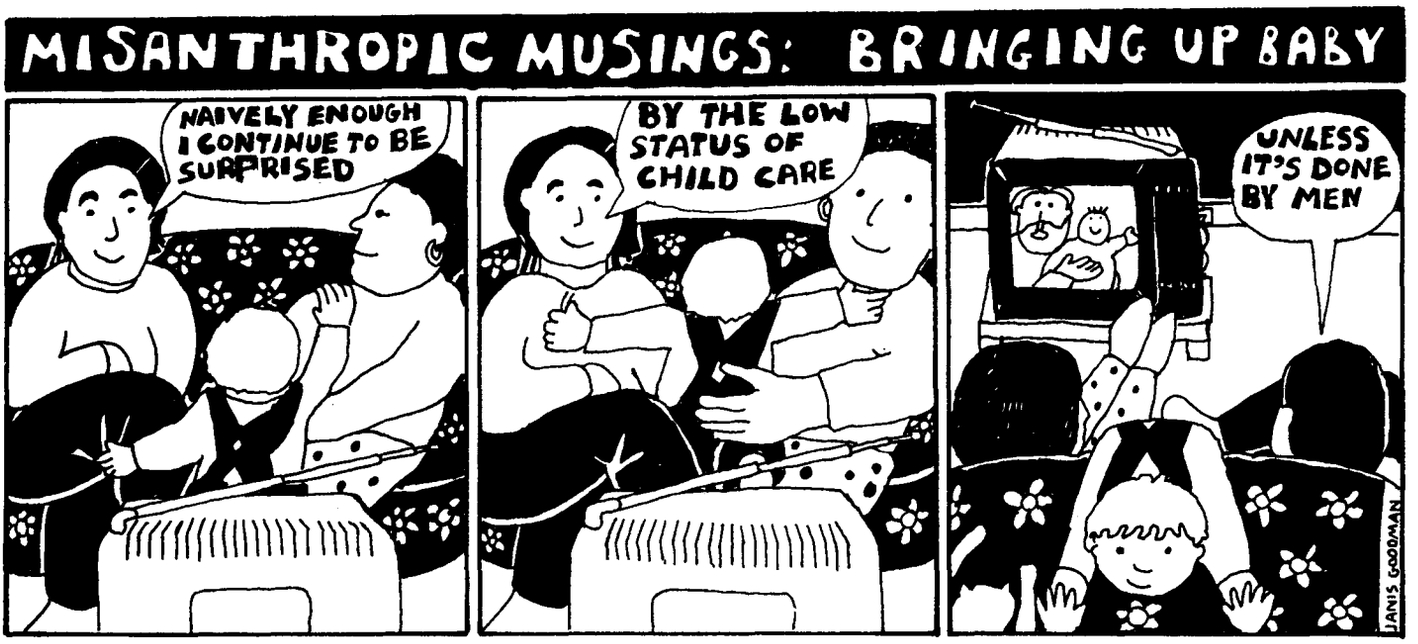
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BY THE LOW STATUS OF CHILD CARE
UNLESS IT'S DONE BY MEN
JANIS GOODMAN

CHESS

GAME 19 in the Karpov-Kasparov match came to a sour conclusion. Defeat, having stared Karpov in the face and met with no response, was now nudging him in the ribs and clearing its throat in a significant way. But he would not resign — at least, not at the board, in front of the audience. Kasparov reacted by playing his sealed move openly, a dramatic way of indicating that there was nothing left to think about.

Neither player comes out of this well. One might try to excuse Karpov on the grounds that he had played so far beneath himself throughout the game that he had every reason to doubt his judgment on the serious matter of capitulation. Alternatively, if he was still capable of judging the position objectively, he could hardly have intended an insult to the challenger's competence, since the demands on that were so very slight. I suppose one might add that Karpov has not had much practice at losing, which may make it understandable that he should not have acquired the knack of doing it with grace.

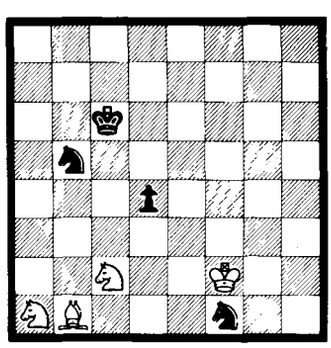
In BBC-2's weekly bulletin on the match Bill Hartston was more inclined to censure Kasparov, describing his action as 'uncouth'. Yet one might surely pardon a momentary lapse from propriety in a 22-year-old excited by imminent victory. One might. But in the next game he did it again. In game 19 the message had been: 'Give up. It's hopeless.' In game 20 playing the sealed move on the board meant: 'This is a dead draw. What are you playing on for?' In both cases Karpov eventually had to concede that what was implicitly asserted was quite correct. The point is, though, that by repeating his open sealing Kasparov leaves us little option but to interpret it as an expression of contempt for his adversary. 'Uncouth' seems a fair description.

With the acrimonious memory of the Karpov-Korchnoi matches in the background people are bound to think that chess masters are a nasty bunch who hate and despise each other. Of course, the fact that 'bad' news is always eminently newsworthy distorts impressions. Most tournaments are comradely affairs in which players sportingly acknowledge painful defeats and patiently conceal any irritation at stubborn pursuit of the bitter end. There is nothing to report on in that. But we cannot pretend that it is just a matter of the media preferring ugly scenes. Quite generally, there seem to be too many sports in which the leading practitioners are conspicuously deficient in sportsmanship for this to be put down to mere coincidence. The nice guys are suckers, too soft. Other things being equal, to be aggressive, hostile and arrogant gives an edge.

With the exception of a tendency on Kasparov's part towards the piercing-stare routine, however, K and K normally have good boardside manners. The trouble is that protracted match chess is absolutely abnormal. Even if the atmosphere in the early games is amicable you can bet that relations will deteriorate to the point where a smiling handshake would be sensational stuff. It is ironic that the major showpiece of international chess should be so far removed from its standard form, which is of course the tournament, not the match. A tournament for the world championship would have many advantages over a match, above all greater variety of players, styles and openings. The recent revamping of the system, particularly if the champion's right to a return match is retained, threatens a tumbling succession of matches. We may get heartily sick of them. Certainly Karpov and Kasparov seem to be well on the way to becoming heartily sick of each other!

Problem

White to play and win. Note that 1. Kxfl Nc3 lets Black off with a draw.



Solution

1. Nb4 + Kc5 2. Nd3 + Kc4 3. Kxfl Na3! 4. Nb2 + Kc3 5. Ndl + Kd2 6. Nb3 + Kxdl 7. Bd3! and 8. Be2 **mate.** Study by V. Kovalenko.

George Botterill

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QUIZ

1) Which former Conservative Minister, now Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank, is to go to South Africa with the Commonwealth mission?

2) Which former Conservative Minister is Chairman of Britannia Arrow, now the object of a take-over bid?

3) Which head of government visited a Sainsbury's supermarket in south London last week?

4) Which country's former head of government appeared in court last week on charges of trying to overthrow the present government?

5) What relation was Lord Home, the former Prime Minister, to Charles Douglas Home, the former *Times* Editor?

6) Which bank is seeking to ban staff from wearing plimsolls, trainers, 'bovver boots' and other 'unconventional shoes'?

7) Which bank has banned Steve Gamble, a senior official of the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union, from its City office?

8) What is the name of the last horse that Lester Piggott rode to victory?

Answers

1) Lord Barber; 2) Geoffrey Rippon; 3) Janos Kadar of Hungary; 4) Thailand; 5) Uncle; 6) National Girobank; 7) Moscow Narodny Bank; 8) Full Choke

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